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THE WHITE QUIVER

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DAWN MIST.

THE WHITE QUIVER

BY

HELEN FITZGERALD SANDERS

Author of
"Trails Through Western Woods"

NEW YORK
DUFFIELD & COMPANY
1913

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TO

HELEN P. CLARKE

"PI-O-TO-PO-WA-KA"

IN WHOSE NOBLE CHARACTER
MINGLES THE BEST OF THE WHITE
RACE AND THE RED, THIS BOOK
IS REVERENTLY AND LOVINGLY
DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

THE White Quiver is a story of the Piegan Indians before they felt the influence of the white man. Although it is a romance, it is an attempt to picture the Indian as he actually was, and every myth, custom and ceremonial has been gleaned from the patriarchs of the tribe.

Of course, where the traditions of a people are handed down by word of mouth instead of in written records, the versions of any given incident must necessarily vary somewhat in the telling. Imagination, prejudice, vanity and difference in viewpoint all lend their peculiar color to circumstances and events, so we must always allow considerable latitude in these old, oft-repeated verbal chronicles. Granting such inevitable va-

riations, I believe I have obtained and presented a true account of the life and ceremonials of the Piegans. The Blackfeet nation composed of the confederated tribes of Bloods, North Blackfeet, and North and South Piegans, was anciently a people of dances, festivals and songs. Each season and propitious event,—the chase, the war-path, the coming and going of guests and countless other occasions were marked by singing, dancing and feasts.

Some of the more important of these are described in the White Quiver. The only possible liberty I have taken is in the love feast. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the maidens kissed the people. Not only have I striven to give these ceremonials faithfully, but I have also endeavored to preserve the old form of speech;—the curiously dignified and impressive phraseology of the Indian. And the reader will understand the spirit of the story better if he bears in mind that every description of mountain, lake, love

and battle is from the Indian viewpoint and is seen through the medium of his fancy.

To Mr. Horace J. Clark I am indebted for the myth of the Wind-God and the naming of the Two Medicine Lakes and River. He received it long ago from the Three Suns, who was generally acknowledged to be Head Chief at the time (about 1837) when the Two Medicine Lodges were built and the pilgrimage was made to Chief Mountain where the Wind-God dwelt.

My account of the Sun Dance ceremonial is based on the statements of Chief Little Dog, Bear Head and other honored members of the tribe, interpreted into English for me by Oliver and Richard Sanderville. I have used every effort to have the description of this solemn and inspiring religious ceremonial absolutely accurate. The Sun Dance is still given every year, but not with the same elaborate ritual of ancient days; nevertheless, it remains a splendid pageant which every

lover of beauty, symbolism and spontaneous dramatic art should do his utmost to preserve.

The White Quiver is an old and honored name among the Piegans, but the character I have drawn, which aims to portray the noblest in the Indian, is in no sense an account of any person having borne the same title. The other characters are likewise creatures of fancy, but they are types of the Indian at his best and his worst.

There is current a tradition of a pinto medicine pony, also of two war parties that started out on horse-stealing expeditions, the soldiers of each of which became faint-hearted and deserted one by one, until the two leaders stood face to face alone, and fought somewhere near the summit of the Rocky Mountains.

The illustrations are the result of the efforts of Hon. Louis W. Hill of St. Paul. He had Indian models posed in Glacier National Park, at various points described in the narrative, and photo-

graphed by well known artists. It would be difficult to estimate the value of these pictures of actual, native types in their old haunts and hunting-grounds.

I am indebted to many friends among the Piegans who have given me help and encouragement and made me one of their tribe, but especially am I indebted to Mr. Horace J. Clarke and Miss Helen P. Clarke of Glacier Park, children of the gallant Major Malcom E. Clarke whose mountain home I have shared, at whose fireside I have listened to the strange old stories, thrilling with memories of a time that has passed and customs that are no more; where I have watched the aged hunters and warriors live over again the wildly exhilarating scenes of the chase and the war-path, expressed in animated gesture and earnest speech.

It would not be fitting to close this brief statement without further reference to Helen P. Clarke, "Pi-o-to-po-wa-ka." To her the Indians turn in time of trouble and perplexity, in hunger, sickness and

distress, knowing that in her they have a wise counselor, an unfailing friend and an intellect of which their nation may be proud. In her I have found inspiration and the desire to perpetuate the ideals of her mother's race and to her this book is offered as a loving tribute.

Helen Fitzgerald Sanders
"Much-eh-ni-cha."

Glacier Park
February 11, 1913.

THE WHITE QUIVER

The White Quiver

CHAPTER I

THE silver cycle of the moons had brought the year to that season of golden mists and blue shadows called Indian Summer. The leaves had begun to yellow and flame, the wild geese were flying southward in honking squadrons and the beasts of the wild were getting their winter fur. By these and a hundred other signs the ancient Pipe Stem men of the Piegans knew that the time for the Love Feast had come.

Following the letter of a law as old as Sach-kum, the Mother Earth, two Medicine women prepared sacred buffalo tongues and fasted. An O-kon or Medicine Lodge was built with a center pole of cottonwood, shaded with branches and

small evergreen trees. The consecrated structure stood out on the sweep of the prairie which flowed away in ripples and waves to the rim of the horizon where a vast crescent of purple and silver mountains loomed above the clouds of the western sky.

When the preparations were complete and the appointed day had come, choruses went forth chanting the joyous tidings and bidding every virgin, brave and matron to be present at the feast. Although this was essentially the festival of the maids, not a youth would have missed it, for the young and chaste daughters of the tribe, at other times jealously guarded, were permitted to kiss the people on that one hallowed day. Therefore the hearts of the braves beat fast with expectation as the leaves turned, the huckleberries and chokecherries ripened and hoar-frost gleamed in the morning sun.

Shortly after the choruses had gone singing through the land, bright colored

cavalcades came riding across the prairie, bringing their finest raiment of fur and elkskin loaded in parfleches on travois and dragging after them evenly matched, peeled lodge poles for their tipis.

One by one the buffalo hide lodges were erected, each decorated with the history of the warrior or chief to whom it belonged or bearing the mystic symbol of his medicine. They were arranged in a great, double circle, that of Eagle Plume, the head war chief, facing the rising sun. Of all the tipis his was the most splendid and of all the virgins assembled for the feast, his daughter was the fairest of face and the purest of heart. It was said that when Eagle Plume's wife, the Tall Pine, who was possessed of Sun Power, knew that she was about to become a mother, she went into the solitude to await the coming of her child. And as she waited and prayed, fortifying her soul with strength, the dawn broke and the early morning mists arose in shining shapes over the

earth and were lost in the heavens above. At that same moment a girl child opened her eyes on the world and the Tall Pine named her the Dawn Mist because, like the gossamer vapors, she was a child of the dawn.

When everything was ready, each maid, clad in the finest garment her family could afford, appeared in the Medicine Lodge. Some entered with the bright blush of expectation and some, perhaps, trembled and were afraid. It was a solemn occasion. By this sacred test the virtue of the maids was proved or blasted and should a brave be present who knew that a girl were unfit to eat of the holy tongues, upon pain of destruction by Na-to-si, the Sun-God, he must proclaim her shame. There could be no lying or subterfuge, and as a terrible example, a cast out creature shrank far back in the shadow, hiding her noseless face, the brand of shame, beneath her tattered blanket.

The maidens filed into the hallowed

circle of the Medicine Lodge in the presence of the patriarchs and Medicine women and around them stood the spectators, silent, waiting.

The music of the drum, the rattle and the sacred songs sounded through the quiet. The impressive ceremony proceeded, even to the feast of the tongues and at last the virgins were ready to kiss the people.

Towering a good head above the warriors about him was a young man of giant stature and noble face. His bronze-colored, hard-muscled body, which showed the purification of icy waters and stern suppression of the flesh, was bare to the waist save for a snow-white quiver that hung across his shoulders. His legs were lithe with much running; his chest was broad and deep with full-lunged breaths of mountain air and his far-visioning eyes had the keen, sweeping glance of a dweller in the wilderness. He was simply clad in buckskin leggins, moccasins and a stout belt which held a short knife.

On his black-maned head was a war-eagle bonnet that fell in a double series of plumes to the ground. Beside him rested his shield and spear. During the long hours of the ceremony he stood stoically calm with his arms folded over his breast. Only his eyes moved and they followed the Dawn Mist.

His great size, his clean hewn features or the dazzling white quiver which was his emblem, caused men to turn and look at him again. One of the braves stared at him fixedly, almost challengingly, as he noted the direction of the young man's gaze.

He, oblivious to the people about him, watched the Dawn Mist in a dream of wonder. Her black hair and pale face were like the meeting place of the night and day. She seemed to him to be a creature of the clouds,—a pale, fair silvery mist of the morning that shapes itself for an instant against the blue, then is lost,—less of a reality than an illusion.

When the virgins passed by and he

stooped to receive their chaste tribute, their kisses fell as coldly as rain upon him until the Dawn Mist in her creamy elkskin garment, trimmed with white winter weasels, elks' teeth and porcupine quills, paused before him. The intensity of his desire drew her dark eyes to his and drenched her cheek with crimson. As he felt her lips upon his own, a thrill vibrated through his great body, a fire leaped in his veins and he trembled. Then, swift as a butterfly, she was gone.

The light vanished from the White Quiver's soul and he remembered no more.

CHAPTER II

THE sun beat down upon the world in a fury of white heat. His devouring beams scorched prairie and woodland and sucked the sources of the streams until only limp trickles of water showed where boisterous torrents had been. There was nothing to eat; nothing to drink. Ponies were dropping in their tracks on the quivering, crisped trails, while overhead black buzzards circled in the burning blue. The Piegans seemed to be doomed and the awe-struck people stared at each other helplessly out of scared, sunken eyes.

Just at this time some young men of the Brave Band, sent out by Eagle Plume to reconnoiter the country, discovered a stream flowing almost undiminished through banks of green, and three beauti-

ful lakes, set one above the other. There berries grew in ripeness and plenty. The news was proclaimed through the lodges and the order given to break camp and march for the one last spot that did not bear the fatal brand of drought and famine.

It proved to be as the young men of the Brave Band had said. Through the scorched prairie land, bordered by pleasant woods of pine and quaking asp and silver poplar, rushed a cold, deep river green with the liquid emerald of virginal purity, flashing white now and again around a hindering stone and rippling in elfin glee over the mosaic of pebbles in its bed. Here was delicious, cool shadow; here was drink,—ah! the magic of the word!—and here also were masses of sarvisberry bushes, purple with luscious, ripe fruit.

To this spot came Eagle Plume and his followers, the largest band of the tribe and with him were his wife, the Tall Pine, his daughter, the Dawn Mist and

her half-mad, moon-gazing brother the Night Wind, who lightened the way with jests and laughed in the face of death. That was ever the boy's way, for the Great Mystery had not taught him what danger meant.

There was a strange resemblance between the Dawn Mist and her brother, not so much when her features were in repose as when she was startled or afraid. Then the wildness of her nature, which was commonly dormant and controlled, flashed into being and made her seem like him in whom ungoverned wildness held sway. Therefore the likeness seemed rather of spirit than of flesh. There was a subtle understanding between them. She was often his companion in his impetuous ramblings. In the moon of tender leaves they hunted eggs of water fowl in reed-grown marshes about little lakes, braving the Su-ye-tup-pi, or Under-Water people. What fearful pleasure there was in this! Every cloud-shadow, every ripple on the clear surface of the

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pool might be an Under-Water person come to seize them! But once they secured the beautiful, pale-greenish, speckled eggs, they hurried off triumphantly to roast them and feast. Sometimes, too, there were water-lilies in the lakes,—discs of gold which the Night Wind gathered for his sister's hair, wreathing the voluptuous blossoms around her head until she looked like a water-siren herself and he was half afraid of her. They picked chokecherries, sarvisberries, huckleberries and all the luscious fruits of the plain and mountain side. The Dawn Mist was woodland-wise. She knew where the rarest flowers grew; where the squirrels hid their winter stores; where the coney and the whistling marmot played; where the shy water ouzel built her nest by the fall and where yellow breasts and blue birds sang. And she told the Night Wind beautiful, fanciful things about the wood folk and the winged hosts of upper air,—the birds, the butterflies that are sleep bringers, the

dragon flies with iridescent wings and the clouds that fly above them all. She wove for him gilt and rainbow fancy with dull reality until the Night Wind's unbalanced mind was bright with fleeting glimpses of many things, like the momentary flash of blue wings in the gold light of the sun.

Those happy days were gone but now in the face of starvation they clung together.

Eagle Plume halted at the river that O-ma-qui-tos or Wolf Medicine, the wisest of the patriarchs, might smoke the sacred pipe and offer thanks to Na-to-si, the Sun-God, who, through some fault of his earth children, was scourging them with almighty wrath. They paused and prayed and rested, then Eagle Plume, leaving behind him his wife and children, rode on ahead to look the country over and find the best camping ground. The young men of the Brave Band led him up the stream to a lake that spread its clear waters among wooded shores. At its head stood the mighty gray-blue moun-

tain, Ma-qui-o-po-ach-sin, the Rising Wolf, its ponderous haunches whitened with snow, its stone muzzle thrust defiantly into the hot, blue sky.

"Here we will camp," said Eagle Plume.

And as he said so it was done. The painted tipis rose amid the green, the famished people lay on the ground and ate with the ferocious hunger of wild beasts and drank deep and long and often of the cold waters to quench the fever in their blood. Others came and yet others, until hosts poured over the plains to this refuge and lodges were pitched from the forks of the river to the second lake, a distance of several miles. But soon the grass was trampled beneath the tread of crowding hoofs, cropped close by the ceaseless tearing of hunger-strengthened jaws; the sarvisberry bushes which had been heavy and purple with fruit, were stripped stark and bare. It was as though a plague of locusts had shorn the little land of plenty beside the stream.

There was an old woman among the tribe called Ky-O, which means the grizzly bear. And as the grizzly is the one creature most dreaded because he is possessed of a potently wicked spirit, so the woman Ky-O, his namesake, was likewise feared. When she came or whence, no one knew, yet the oldest men remembered her in their youth and even then she was a withered hag. It was whispered that she had an evil eye and truly it was unlike that of any human being. Beneath the film of years showed a murky blue with a rim of yellow and when the hag fell into rages, as she often did, and called down curses upon her enemies, a terrible light, as of fire, darted from those unearthly orbs. The Piegans believed that she could conjure up deadly spells and there were stories of unfortunates who had withered away under the malice of her will. She was a creature of mystery. Often she disappeared for days to commune (so it was said) with the powers of darkness. It was also whispered that she

had secret caves in the mountains where Ky-O, her accursed kind, came and instructed her in their medicine. Some went so far as to assert that at will she could assume the form of a grizzly bear. A lean, gray wolf-dog, with dripping lip snarling over his fangs, always followed at her heels.

She had been gone from the new moon to its fullness when one day she appeared at the camp on the lowest lake. Little children ran out of the tipis to look at her askance and the dogs barked at her as she passed.

She stopped by the lodge of Eagle Plume, where he, with the Tall Pine and the Dawn Mist were resting in the shadow from the great heat of the day.

"Hai ye! Chief," she shrilled. "I am poor. I have no fine pelts and feathers. I grub, like striped-face, the badger, for the bite I eat. I am poor, but I know many things. I am not as the grasshopper who sings and takes no heed of to-morrow.

"Listen to me. I will speak straight.

"You and your people have filled your bellies and stripped the last berry from the bushes. You have come like gluttons and robbed the land. Sach-kum, the Mother Earth is angry. The Under-Ground persons are angry. The Medicine Animals are angry. Yet you sleep and rest, wise chief, and proud woman and moon-faced maid. I have been far away and seen and heard.

"The fires are kindling!

"Their roar will be hoarse in your ears before the sun sets thrice!

"Death threatens you all!"

While she spoke a crowd gathered and she laughed, a shrill, cracked treble laugh, to see the terror in their staring eyes and drawn faces. They listened in awe to her words. There were many signs to point to the truth of what she said. Ever since the Medicine Pinto Pony of the tribe had been stolen in the moon of yellowing leaves, ill luck had been their portion. The loss of the pony

was an evil sign. Soon after it disappeared, its owner, Clear Water, father of the White Quiver and rival of Eagle Plume had fallen sick and not even the skill of the best medicine men could save him. Likewise the game vanished as by black magic; the winter came, a gaol of ice and snow which held them prisoners until the dry, parched moon of blighted flowers threatened them with new disaster. Ky-O was right. Every bit of moisture had been licked up by the thirsty sun, the trees were as tinder and fires would surely come.

Eagle Plume spoke half-hearted, reassuring words but his tribesmen shook their heads and said:

"She has heard these things from her kin, the grizzly bears. What she foretells will come true."

And as she had prophesied, before three sunsets, thin blue spirals of smoke were seen rising from distant forests. The spirals swelled into great, gray and yellow billows that hid the sky. And

through the opal drift the sun burned rayless, vermilion, by day, and the moon showed like a blood stain by night. The fury of those forest fires grew and the heavens glowed as a brazen bowl, and with the deepening shadows of night the reflection of the flames glowed infernally where the pale stars were wont to shine. Closer and closer came the red menace. The dry trees caught with the least spark and the fire ran in long, nimble, orange-gold fingers from ridge to ridge, from mountain to mountain. There was something horribly playful about it. Up the boles of the tallest pines it coiled, lapping and caressing as it devoured; finally bursting in a whirlwind of blinding bright sparks above the utmost crests of the tortured trees.

The people watched and waited, some awed into stony calm, others frantic with fear. But the Night Wind laughed in wild joy. He loved the brave, free fire with its mad pranks and spectacular flights.

"Ah! to be a fire!" he cried as he watched it. "To fly,—fly in a flood of flame on the wind; to go leaping from tree to tree and run light as a breath to the mountain tops! That would be living!"

At such times the Dawn Mist took him in her arms and soothed him with stories until his restless spirit was calmed with sleep.

Eagle Plume called a council and by the advice of the chief Medicine men determined that something be done to propitiate the anger of Na-to-si, the Sun-God. After grave consideration the council decided to build two medicine lodges, one at the forks of the river and one on the shore of the lowest lake, and that seven patriarchs be sent into each of the lodges to fast and pray.

The lodges were built with ceremony and care, in accordance with the traditions of the tribe and when they were completed, seven of the wisest and most aged men entered each lodge.

They remained without food or communion with the world until seven times the sun rose and set. Then they came forth and gave the assembled chiefs and warriors the message of the Great Mystery. In their devotional meditations He had revealed to them that eight brave and learned men of the nation must be chosen to make a pilgrimage to Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain of the North. There at sunrise the Wind-God would appear and as he paused to hail the dawn, they must intercede with him for the people.

Eight fearless men were selected, mostly those seasoned with the experience of age but among them was the young Owl Brave, a man of few years but many deeds, a favorite of Eagle Plume and in spite of his youth, leader of the Mosquito Band of the I-kun-uh-kah-tsi. They were given the best mounts and escorted by warriors far out over the prairie where they were lost to view in the smoke. Long after the marching column had disappeared, through the silence of the camp

sounded the faintling echo of a song of hope.

The people waited but the dawns wore into nights and the nights faded into mere, ghostly shadows of days, and always there was the smothering smoke and the menace of the fire. They were hopeful at first, then after a while, spent much time trying to explain the delay. The journey was long, they knew, and besides, the Wind-God might not show himself at once. But as time passed and infants wailed with hunger as they sucked in vain at their mothers' parched breasts; as the dull pain of starvation wracked the elders; as the gaunt ponies fell and the buzzards fed greedily on their carcasses, the waiting tribe began to despair.

Each day runners were sent out to look for the delegation and at last they returned, proclaiming to the camp that the wise men from Chief Mountain were close at hand. It was true. They had come, but by their averted eyes and dejected mien it was plain that they brought

bad tidings. Slowly and painfully the leader of the little band told the story before Eagle Plume. He and his fellows had reached Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain, scaled its steep ascent even to its ultimate peak and there they waited. As the patriarchs had prophesied, out of the bowels of the mountain, the Wind-God arose, a shining figure of mighty size, with white wings spreading from either side of his head, naked save for a garment of golden fleece. He towered gigantic and terrible in his might. He looked toward the rising sun, faced about to the sunset, to the Cold Country and the Warm Country, and was gone! Not one among them had the courage to intercede for the starving people. During three days they waited and thrice the Spirit came and went, and in that time no word of supplication was uttered.

On all sides the death wail of starvation sounded through the lodges. Cracking lips muttered curses and bony fists were

"THE BROW OF EAGLE PLUME WAS DARK."

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shaken threateningly at the men who had betrayed their trust and failed.

The brow of Eagle Plume was dark. He called a second council and once more the patriarchs went into the two Medicine Lodges to fast, to pray and to listen for the message of the Great Mystery. Then they delivered the sacred command. It was this. Twice the original number of the wisest, strongest and most courageous warriors should be sent to Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain to intercede with the Wind-God. With great care the new delegation was chosen at a public assembly. One after another was named, until there lacked but one to complete the sixteen. In the silence of indecision that had fallen on the council, a young man who had sat far back, listening, stood on his feet. He was huge of stature and the muscles swelled in welts of bronze over his chest and back and in his lithe arms. He was a youth of noble countenance and he wore a snow-white quiver. He held up one hand to stay the council and

walked straight to where Eagle Plume sat in the center of the great circle, facing the sun.

"Oh, Chief!" said the young man, and his voice rang loud and clear, "I have had a dream. It was a good dream. Grant that I may go. If I fail to pray the Wind-God for food and drink for the people, may the Great Spirit strike me dead!"

The Owl Brave half rose in protest, but someone plucked him down again.

Eagle Plume looked long and questioningly into the youth's eyes.

"By what great *coup* have you earned the right to go?"

"It is not by what I have done, but by what my spirit is strong to do, that I ask to face the Wind-God," the White Quiver replied.

After a silence, quick with suspense, Eagle Plume said slowly: "White Quiver, your father was my enemy, but he was a brave and noble man. My heart feels good toward you! I believe you have his courage. Go! Prove your-

self fearless. If you return successful, you will be a chief among the people."

The White Quiver bowed low. Beneath his skin the blood flowed hot.

"Unless I face the Wind-God and demand of him the rain, I shall not return," he answered.

The sixteen patriarchs and warriors, headed by O-ma-qui-tos or Wolf Medicine, the leader of the wise men, mounted and were gone, and there followed them across the burning hot gold of the prairie, the death cry of the dying and the moans of these who wept their loved ones' fate. The horror of it sank deep into the White Quiver's heart, and he swore to Na-to-si, the Sun, Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, the Moon, Epi-so-ax, the Morning Star and Sachkum, the Mother Earth that he would not fail. But more than the death wail of the dying or the lament of the bereaved, the thought of the Dawn Mist as he had seen her last, mettled him to great deeds. He had chanced to come upon her in the dusk, beside the lodge

of Eagle Plume and she looked more than ever like the frail and fleeting mountain mists that float away in the early morn. She, too, was starving. The sight had made his heart leap in his breast like a lion from its lair. He had determined then, to offer himself to the Council to save her,—and the people. He lived it all over again as he rode across the prairie through the falling cinders and the low hanging smoke.

The party pressed on by day, resting at night under the brazen sky. They swung around the lower of the two Walled-in or Entrance Lakes, passed the slopes of the Yellow Mountain to where Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief, reared his coral cone against the sky. They waited on the mountain-top during one long night. At last, the dawn stole ghostly-pale across the sky.

The White Quiver crouched low, his thews flint hard, his teeth drawing blood from his lip. With wide eyes he watched the flush of the sunrise blossom like a

wild rose in the east. It was as though he were upon an island floating in a sea of vapor. Above, the air was clear; below the smoke rolled in an opal sea. Broad bars of red-gold spanned the heavens; the world thrilled with a great awakening as the disc of fire appeared on the edge of the horizon. At the same moment a shining figure of heroic size rose from the depths of the mountain where primordial fires had burned, and soared high towards the sky. His divine, yet terrible head, from which grew and spread two white wings, was crowned with cloud plumes and illuminated by the first rays of the rising sun. His eyes, which shone with the mellow glow of the young sunbeams and gazed out afar through space, past time, into infinity, cradled the lightning. His closed lips held back the thunderbolt, his wings set in motion the four winds. On his naked body he wore a fleece of gold and around him shone an aureole of light. He looked towards the sunrise, faced slowly

about to the sunset, to the region of snow and to the land of summer. The sixteen watchers were as dead men in his awful presence.

The White Quiver was blinded and overcome. He saw the god salute the day and face the cardinal points. All power was gone from him, when, suddenly, the thought of the Dawn Mist rushed across his mind. Awful strength came to his body and heart and he sprang fiercely at the Wind-God, barely grasping the flowing fringes of his golden fleece. The White Quiver dropped on his knees and his voice rolled through the silence of the mountains and the dawn.

"O! Wind-God," he cried. "You who cause the winds to blow and the rain to fall, hear me! The women and children in our lodges are starving. There is no meat to eat. The berries are gone. The streams are dry. And now the fires burst from the timber and threaten to destroy us. Have mercy, Master of the

Elements. Send us rain. Send us the buffalo. Save us!"

The Shining Spirit stood motionless a moment, then his white wings fluttered, and obedient to their motion a cool breeze leaped out of the breathless void. He raised his mighty arm and pointed with a finger of light in the direction of the Red Hills.

Then the god vanished and was gone.

At first the wind blew in little, uncertain gusts, then it swelled into a rushing volume like the tide of a rolling sea, breaking in huge, life-giving waves upon them. Harder and stronger it blew,—flocks of clouds drifted over the heavens and a dense canopy obscured the sun. A raindrop splashed on the White Quiver's upturned face. Another and another fell and the earth exhaled the wonderful, fresh fragrance that it gives forth when rain moistens sun-heated ground. With a glint of violet lightning and a crash of thunder, the clouds deepened into steel-blue, vapory masses which

poured down saving floods. For three whole days and nights it rained and when the clouds cleared and the sun shone again, it was upon a transfigured world. The forest fires were quenched, the feverish heat was gone and new life was everywhere.

After the wise men and warriors, led by the White Quiver, started on their homeward journey, an event scarcely less miraculous than the appearance of the Wind-God took place. The earth was firm after the rain and plainly imprinted on its damp surface, the White Quiver saw the hoof prints of a cradle-footed horse. He knew the hoof prints well. They were those of the lost Pinto Pony!

He and his fellows followed the tracks until they came upon the Pony, feeding on a few parched bunches of buffalo grass. The little animal had grown so thin that its bones showed beneath its loose hide. As soon as it saw its young master, it raised its head, whinnied shrilly, then galloped, at full speed, to

meet him. The Great Medicine of the Piegans was recovered and the White Quiver knew that the prediction of the Wind-God would be fulfilled.

As the party approached the camp near the two Medicine Lodges, shouts of joy rang in their ears. Across the prairie, which already showed velvet green, a gay cavalcade rode out to greet the triumphant delegation. They were escorted to the lodge of Eagle Plume, who sat upon his couch, just beneath his Medicine Bundle, robed in princely splendor. To his right sat an ancient Pipe Stem man. The Dawn Mist stood near her father, holding the sacred pipe.

The wise men and warriors entered and took their places before the Great Chief.

The Dawn Mist filled the pipe with *l'herb* and handed it to the Pipe Stem man. He presented it to the sun saying:

"O! Na-to-si, have pity, have charity. Smile upon my kinsfolk, the Piegans, and upon all the people!"

He turned the pipe south, north, east and west, crossed it, took one deep whiff, rubbing his breast as he did so, to purify himself. Then he offered it to the Mother Earth, saying:

"O! Sach-kum, have pity, have charity. Smile upon my kinsfolk, the Piegans, and upon all the people."

The pipe was passed from mouth to mouth, from east to west around the circle. Only the Pipe Stem man smoked a second time as the Pipe was finally passed back to him.

After this was done, Wolf Medicine, the oldest of the wise men and Ni-nampskan or Medicine men, who led the party to Chief Mountain, told the story of their adventure. He was an impressive figure as he stood before the Great Chief, his long, white hair falling to his shoulders which bent beneath the piled-up years, his fine face lined with epoch-marking antiquity. He was a man of surpassing sapience and distinction, and

the dignity of his age added weight to the wonderful tale.

Eagle Plume listened attentively to each syllable and at last, calling the White Quiver to him, he said:

"Your heart is strong. Your spirit is great. You shall be called chief in the councils. You have saved our people."

The White Quiver trembled with joy but he could find no words to reply for he felt the eyes of the Dawn Mist upon him.

CHAPTER III

THE young men of the different bands went crying through the lodges the glorious news that when Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, the moon hung like a slender yellow rind in the sky, the tribe would march to the Red Hills to hunt buffalo, in obedience to the sign of the Wind-God. They bade the people, by order of Eagle Plume, to assemble in his lodge to honor the White Quiver who had delivered them from the curse that had been upon them.

The hunters felt the old lust of the chase. Their wasted limbs became strong; a new gleam kindled in their dull eyes and they began at once to busy themselves looking over their arms and clothing, to see that all was fit for the hunt.

The spirit of the White Quiver was

possessed of a mighty energy that beat within him like a raging tide. The very soul of him surged and he longed to leap and bound like a wild thing, in sheer abandon of joy. In spite of poverty, of youth, of the old feud between his father, Clear Water and Eagle Plume, he had won his place of honor in the tribe. All day, in his simple lodge, which bore no painted record of great deeds, he sat, outwardly calm and impassive, while his tribesmen crowded about him to hear more of the adventure on Chief Mountain. But when evening fell, darkly blue as the petals of the gentian flower, and the lingering people went their several ways to prepare for the ceremony, he bounded off through the shadows. Some power irresistible was calling, calling out of the solitude, and his spirit rushed to meet it and mingle with it in the mystery of the night. The stars splashed the purple sky with cold, white light. The black pines traced lacy patterns against the silver sheen and up out of the earth

came balsam odors, like incense, that stirred holy, half-forgotten memories. The White Quiver hurried on, leaping over rocks and brake until the wild song of a waterfall sounded in his ears. The terrible music stirred in him huge, primal emotions. Freedom, strength, power that knows no bound or bond, it sang and he answered aloud:

"You speak brave words, O! Fall! My spirit shall be even as you are,—all freedom, strength and power that knows no bound or bond."

The voice of the fall and that of the White Quiver mingled and sounded through the still night.

He did not stop nor hesitate until he came to the place where the river issues from a natural tunnel in the cliffs and drops with a glint of churning foam and a thunderous roar into its bed below.

He stood there palpitating under the caress of the wilderness; gazing rapt and receptive at the fall and beyond it

at the vast, black mass of Ma-qui-o-po-ach-sin, the Rising Wolf, cutting boldly into the heavens. Floating about the mountain's summit, drifted a nebulous mist, star-lit and shining and fleeting as a passing breath in the night. As he stood, he heard a stealthy footfall and instinctively his right hand grasped the hilt of the knife which he carried at his hip. He turned to face the approaching thing, when, out of the curtain of darkness stepped the Dawn Mist. A cry came up out of his heart, the dagger dropped from his relaxed fingers and with one leap he was beside her. Yet as he came near her he retreated a step. She seemed, in some inexplicable way, to be as far removed, as little of the flesh as the star-lit mist on the mountain top. Her garments of cream buckskin showed white in the star-glow and she wore over her black hair, around her pale oval face a head dress made of feathers of the white swan. She stopped abruptly at sight of him and her breath came fast.

They looked at each other a long moment, then he said:

"You are alone?"

"Yes." Her voice was low and sweet as a wind song. "I was stifling in the lodge. The heat,—the people,—I wanted to fly."

"Tell me," said the White Quiver, "did something out of the night call you,—some power you could not see nor hear nor yet resist?"

She bent her head.

"It is so," she answered.

"Then we were both drawn by the same force, here to each other," he cried, and his arms were about her and his lips fell on her face, raining hot kisses.

"Listen," he continued. "Since that day at the Love Feast when you kissed me,—do you recall it—you have been the pure stream of my life that has watered my parched heart and made it bloom. Wherever I have been, you have been with me. I have seen you in the clouds, in the wind-dancing trees, on the moun-

tain tops and the levels of the prairie and in the gold-rayed Evening Star. I have seen you everywhere and always. And at night I have dreamed of you. For you, not the tribe I went to Chief Mountain. For you I braved the Wind-God. I love you."

He was showering kisses upon her again, holding her tight against his throbbing breast, when she struggled to free herself and looked at him with something of terror in her eyes.

"We do wrong," she said. "If my father knew . . . O! I would not bring harm to you in your hour of glory!"

"Wait!" said the White Quiver. "Tell me, do you love me?"

She lifted her eyes to his and her soul spoke through them.

Once more he pressed her to him and she swayed in his arms as a young pine in the embrace of the lover-wind.

A strange, cracked, unearthly laugh fell discordantly, hideously on the silence and an old woman, bent almost double,

like a horned moon, appeared. It was Ky-O, the witch woman, she of the evil eye, and at her heels came her wolf-dog, his eyes showing green in the blackness.

The Dawn Mist tottered and grew faint with fear. The White Quiver held her and sternly faced the hag. The wicked, glee-laughter broke again and again in peals of horrid mirth.

"Hai ye! Fools, fools, fools kissing over blood drip and bleaching bones!" she cried.

"What mean you, hag?" demanded the White Quiver.

"Fools, fools, fools kissing over blood drip and bleaching bones!"

The sinister words smote them both with dread. The Dawn Mist strove to shut out the hateful sound by pressing her hands to her ears, but it penetrated deep into her heart. What did she know, —she of the dim, blear eyes that saw not the things of earth but those beyond, that she should say this ghastly riddle? Even after she and her lean, gray wolf-dog,

with hanging tongue and sharp fangs, had passed on, the White Quiver and the Dawn Mist felt the thrall of impending evil upon them. He spoke comforting words but they were hollow. He kissed her but the kisses withered like blighted flowers.

"It must be time for the ceremony in my father's lodge. We shall be missed!" cried the Dawn Mist with new alarm.

"We will hurry back," he answered, "but listen, Dawn Mist; swear to me by the Sun, the Moon and the flowering Earth, that in spite of the powers of darkness, of enemies and death itself, you will be forever mine."

"I will be yours," she answered, "if not in this world, then in the Great White Desert of Eternity."

"When we return from the buffalo hunt in the Red Hills, I shall ask your father for you and give him all I own in offer for your hand," he said.

They kissed each other once again beneath the stars.

"O! daughter of my Chief! O! White Mist of the Dawn!" he whispered.

She pressed into his hand a token—the necklace of white shells which she had worn at her throat.

Then they hurried off like frightened children in the night, to join the gathering assembly at the lodge of Eagle Plume.

CHAPTER IV

THE lodge of Eagle Plume was the largest and finest in the tribe. It was made of buffalo hides cunningly fastened together and upon the smooth surface of its exterior, in multi-colored pigments, were painted the Chief's adventures in the hunt and on the war-path. The life story told by the pictures, which were much the same in spirit and often in form, as the heroic picture-annals of the ancient Egyptians, was as thrilling as romance and showed Eagle Plume to be a man of many deeds. Episode followed episode with dramatic sequence, culminating in the *grand coup* that made him head chief and his wife, the Tall Pine, first woman of the nation.

This occasion was a battle between the Assiniboines and Piegans, in the Cypress hills. During the struggle, as the blood-

drunk warriors fought breast to breast, hacking with knife and lunging with spear, Eagle Plume and the Tall Pine, who had followed him into battle, were cut off and took refuge in a grove of small, lodgepole pines covering a hillock. They were discovered and attacked by a war party of Assiniboines who charged the hill furiously, shouting the war-cry in anticipation of victory. As the enemy dashed at the vantage point of Eagle Plume and the Tall Pine, she, even with the arrows singing their shrill death song in her ears, paused serene with faith, and made a prayer to the sun,—then with the courage of a warrior took her place by her husband's side and fought with him. Theirs were as charmed lives. The rain of arrows fell harmless around them but each missile of their own bit into the vitals of a foe, who dropped with a spurt of red blood, to earth. Eagle Plume abandoned the shielding trees, and fired with mighty courage, issued forth to the attack, closing in upon the Assini-

boines, giving each his death wound, striking and scalping the bodies as they fell. The few survivors became terror-stricken. Who was this warrior, invulnerable and death-dealing? They felt in him a force they knew not of and fled helter-skelter, peering back, with scared faces to see if the merciless champion were pursuing them. But he, with the Tall Pine, returned to the Piegans' camp, bearing the scalps he had taken. They had been reckoned among the dead and when they were seen, returning unharmed, it seemed no less than a miracle. The Tall Pine told with solemnity that it was the Great Spirit who had given strength to their arms, death to their aim and brought them back victorious and in safety. His benignant power had clothed Eagle Plume as in a mantle which no barb or spear could pierce.

The people realized that this deliverance had been accomplished because the medicine of the Tall Pine was strong and the courage of Eagle Plume greater than

that of his peers. From that time he took precedence over Clear Water, the father of the White Quiver, as head chief and thus there was enmity between the two foremost tribal leaders. This deed of the Tall Pine gave her the title and standing of Medicine Woman and the tribe bestowed upon her every honor that the sacred office demanded.

Eagle Plume, who, after the custom of his people, had several wives, in gratitude to the Tall Pine, his favorite, put the others away and pensioned them, and she became the sole possessor of his heart.

Now the Great Chief had reached the full ripeness of manhood. Upon his noble face was the calm majesty of power; the gentleness of strength withheld, the serenity that is the result of undisputed authority. Yet despite the fact that he was despot and monarch in everything but name, the hero of a score of bloody battlefields, he was a kindly and simple man, gracious of manner, courteous to the humblest of his subjects, and generous to

his enemies. And though he was counted wealthy in the possession of horses and pelts, he held these things in trust and the morrow would find him poor if his people should be in want.

The interior of the lodge was oriental in luxuriousness. The couch of Eagle Plume was opposite the entrance, facing the rising sun. Extending from this central point, in a circle, were the couches of all the family save the Night Wind, who, being half-mad, occupied a tipi alone after the ancient custom. The couches were separated by screens of willow shoots, evenly matched, stained and carved in finely-traced patterns and bound together firmly with lacings of colored wool. These panels, narrow at the top and widening towards their base, stood on three stout legs, much the same as the modern easel of the studios. These legs, or rests, were also carved and stained. Over the couch of Eagle Plume hung the scalps he had taken on the war-path and his Great Medicine, which was con-

cealed in a leather case, painted the sacred reddish-brown color, with fringes of leather and mystic symbols wrought thereon. No one was permitted to touch it or even to approach it too closely, except the master himself. Above his couch also hung his bonnet of war-eagle feathers in a smaller case of fringe-decked hide. His ceremonial costumes of elk-skin and buckskin, finely trimmed in porcupine quills and skins, when not in use, hung in ornamental rows on the lodge walls or reposed in parfleche cases bearing designs painted in bright colors. On the floor, close within reach, was a square of wood, hollowed out a little in the center and carved. On this lay his pipe of red stone, with richly adorned stem, and his flint and tinder. This same pipe had been smoked by his father and his father's father; on this same board had been mixed *l'herb* leaves for the sacred smoke for as many generations. On the lodge walls was a silk buffalo hide and other rare pelts, and fluttering

from thongs on the exterior were innumerable tufts of bison tails,—trophies of the chase.

By the couch of her lord was that of the Tall Pine, decked with finely woven corn husk Nez Percè bags and parfleche cases containing the fruit of her toil. There she sat day by day, patiently plying her art of needlecraft, imagining, then executing exquisite designs, making rich garments for her husband, her children and herself. Next in order was the couch of the Dawn Mist, decorated with pelts and bags, polished metal mirrors, necklaces, bracelets and all the little maidenly trinkets a young girl loves. The others were reserved for guests or the passing stranger. No one was denied shelter and food, and once within the tipi, even though the visitor proved to be the direst foe he was shielded from harm according to the sacred and inviolate laws of hospitality. With him the master of the lodge shared the last bit of food, which the guest, in turn, by traditions

held equally holy, accepted as gratefully as though it were a feast of marrow bones or hump of buffalo.

In the center of the lodge was the fire and over it hung the great kettle in which food was cooked.

So perfectly was the huge cone of hides constructed, that the smoke rose as in a chimney, issuing from the opening far above. An impression of vastness was given by the circular form of the tipi, narrowing as its height increased, until only a small patch of blue or starlit sky showed in the opening at its peak.

Around this lodge of the Great Chief those who were bidden to the ceremony in honor of the White Quiver assembled. The hour grew late, but the young chief did not come. And the Dawn Mist, where was she? Eagle Plume smoked in impassive silence, replying now and again to questions of the old men who sat near him, but his eyes forever sought the lodge door or looked upward through the fantastically curling smoke toward the

stars. The Tall Pine busied herself in small ways. Now she laid a faggot on the fire, again she began a feverish round of the lodge, putting things to rights, but she, too, like Eagle Plume, secretly watched the lodge door as she bent over in feigned occupation.

Outside, musicians beat a monotonous tattoo on the drums. The Owl Brave stood near by with a crowd of his young men and whispered something at which they made grimaces and smiled. Time passed. A curious uneasiness expressed itself in the growing restlessness of the people.

"Where is the Dawn Mist?" someone asked.

"Gathering sweet-grass," answered her mother indifferently.

Just then there was a stir outside and the Dawn Mist entered. A wonderful light shone in her eyes, her cheeks glowed with warm color and she brought with her the breath of the night woods. Her arms were full of sweet-grass. She

looked shyly at her father, her mother and the guests.

"You are cold and it is late," the Tall Pine said, touching her hand. "Come, I will dress you for the ceremony."

Eagle Plume rose, and together with the old men, stepped out into the open, leaving the Dawn Mist alone with her mother.

. . . . . .

The Tall Pine opened the door of the lodge. The drums beat to quicker time and the company entered, headed by Eagle Plume. After him came Wolf Medicine, the Pipe Stem man and the White Quiver. The new chief looked noble in his war regalia. He wore a head dress of war-eagle feathers, a shield of buffalo hide, a bow of elk horn and the snowy quiver by which he was always distinguished. Around his throat was a necklace of pale shells.

A fire leaped and pulsed in the center of the tipi, casting a red glow over the warriors and fantastically painting their

faces, or as suddenly blotting them out with shadow. Over the fire was a tripod and on this hung the kettle of brass filled with pemmican.

Eagle Plume took his place on his couch. He motioned the White Quiver to the seat of honor. To his right sat Wolf Medicine the Pipe Stem man. A little yet to the right, near the sacred pipe, stood a young boy. When all had taken their places there was a lull in the music. At a signal from Wolf Medicine the boy filled the pipe with *l'herb* and the solemn and sacred ceremony of the smoke took place.

Then Eagle Plume stood erect and spoke thus:

"Listen, my Children!

We are about to break camp and go on a march of many camp-fires. There are things which I wish to tell you. My lips speak what my heart feels and my heart is full.

Ye know we have done wrong and brought down on us the anger of the Sun; not because our hearts were bad but because, like little children, we were ignorant and did not know.

You have all been far away hunting or on the war-path and lost the trail so you lay alone, frightened, in the Great Silence,—but always you found your way back to the land of your fathers. It has been the same with us. We missed the trail. We were lost and Na-to-si, the Old Man, was angry. He made the Moon when the snows are deep, cruel and freezing cold. He gutted the land with ice. Our horses froze. Our children suffered. The Moon of Flowers brought the Great Heat and the Sun drank up our streams and seared our grass.

You know what the streams are. They are to the earth as the milk in a mother's breast.

You know what the grass is. The grass is a great chief of Sach-Kum, the earth-mother. The beasts eat it and when it dies they die also.

The streams were dried up. The grass was gone. The ponies died and buzzards gorged on their carcasses.

We were dying.

Then the young men of the Brave Band guided us here where the river was deep and cold and grass and berries grew. We drank of the water and ate our fill of the berries and the ponies cropped the grass down to the naked ground. Soon the berries and the grass were gone. Only the cold waters of the river remained.

The forest fires came and scorched and smothered us. Hot sparks fell instead of rain and branded

us. Death was everywhere. Slow death from starvation. Quick death from the hell of flame.

You know how we built the two Medicine lodges; how this was our last hope. You know, too, how Na-to-si came to the wise men in a dream and revealed His Will which was that eight brave men go to Nĕ-nas-ta-ko, the Chief of the Northern Mountains, and pray to the Wind-God who dwells in its depths. You remember how they went and came back with their duty unfulfilled because their hearts were afraid. . . ."

Here the Owl Brave wrapped his blanket around him and left the lodge. Eagle Plume's lips were compressed into a straight line, his nose pinched down like a hawk's beak and he continued without a pause:

"You know also how the wise men fasted again and Na-to-si came to them in a dream, telling them that sixteen warriors and sages must go as before to Chief Mountain and pray to the Spirit there.

Of those sixteen men, the young White Quiver alone had courage to intercede for you to the Wind-God.

He has a lion's heart. He is like the eagle who dares to face the Sun.

If he had failed your bones and mine would lie

white on the prairie, stripped clean by buzzards and wolves.

I proclaim the White Quiver Chief and I now give for him the ancient ceremony for heroes which the Piegans have forgotten.

We have been far away in the Dark; lost in the Great Loneliness, but we have come home to our Father, the Great Mystery, which dwells in the Sun.

Before we break camp and leave this stream and these three lakes which have been nameless among our forefathers, I call them in your presence, the Two Medicine Lakes and river, so we may always remember it was here we built the two medicine lodges which turned the wrath of the Sun-God from us and saved our people from destruction.

I have spoken and you, my children, have heard."

When he had finished the drums began their measured pulse and rattles accentuated the time. The rhythm of a chant rose and fell, now swelling in a tide of sound, or ebbing into a half-heard, half-imagined minor key. The music of the drums quickened. A band of young men, dressed in festal costume, entered through the open lodge door and began to dance. It was a thrilling exhibition

of grace and strength. As they danced they sang of their brave deeds on the war path. The fire, constantly replenished with faggots, sweet-grass and pine cones, flared in a flood of hot gold light which touched the lithe bodies of the dancers, kindled in their piercing eyes miniature points of flame and picked out every detail of their costumes. Little bells tinkled sympathetic to each gesture, as though at the slightest motion, these splendid, rhythmically moving bodies must break into joyous sound. Enthusiasm possessed the spectators. The war-cry pealed out now and again and deep laughter shook the watchers as the youths enacted some humorous *coup*. They danced around the lodge three times, then disappeared as suddenly as they had come. The music ceased.

The Tall Pine entered and served the guests with chokecherries and *pomme blanche* made into a kind of pemmican, from the kettle boiling over the fire, and though they were all but famished, each

reverently gave a bit of the precious food to Sach-Kum, the Earth-Mother and the Under-Ground spirits before tasting of it.

When she had supplied every one she sat down and ate with her husband and his friends. The feast was but scant; the chokecherries were few and had been gathered with great toil of search and patience, and the *pomme blanche* roots had been grubbed laboriously from the earth, but under the genius of the Tall Pine a delicious preparation was made. They devoured it greedily, and the Tall Pine, never failing in her care, helped them again and again until the last morsel and drop were gone.

The drums started up with new vim. The musicians increased the volume of sound as their spirits rose under the influence of full stomachs. Beneath their redoubled efforts the vibrant hide gave forth a rumble like distant thunder. The guests paused in expectation. Few of them knew what was to come, for this

was a ceremony seldom performed, an honor jealously bestowed.

The White Quiver sat as one in a dream. The weird music, the gilded blaze, the heavy perfumed incense of the sweet-grass, the dancing warriors and the feast, were all as figures and things of fantasy. He was covertly restless and his thoughts were far away in the moonlight by the singing waters with the Dawn Mist. He had looked from face to face as he entered but she was not there. He noticed, too, that the Owl Brave contemptuously remained outside.

The music rose and fell. There was a stir without and the Dawn Mist entered, dancing, followed by a band of maidens, as she had done at the Love Feast. She was singularly beautiful in the fire-flush. Her feet were as wings in their flight and she danced like one inspired. Three times she and her companions whirled around the lodge, bending, swaying, leaping, flying. And as the willow obeys the wind, the White Quiver followed her

least gesture. His restlessness and indifference were gone and he fought himself to keep from leaping up, clasping her and defying them to take her from him. He was still drunk with emotion from that one tryst, yet an undercurrent of fear chilled him. The words of Ky-O sounded ever and always above the beat of drums and the lilt of glad songs. With stony, immovable face he watched the dancers, never seeming to follow anyone, though the Dawn Mist shone out for him like a single star in the night.

The third time, as the maidens circled past, the Dawn Mist darted toward the White Quiver, paused, hesitated and bending over, kissed him. She was out of his reach before he could realize what had happened and her maidens, one by one, followed, each pressing on him the kiss of reward for heroism. They were gone.

The drums beat loudly again. There was yet more to come. This time, a band of old women, wrinkled, toothless,

crooked-backed and withered with age hobbled in. The White Quiver shuddered. Ky-O led the band. The old men shouted their delight. The ancient hags screeched and cackled in broken trebles and made hideous attempts to coerce their stiff and palsied limbs into the mockery of a dance. Three times they made the circle of the lodge, hovering near the fire, pausing over the cauldron with diabolic gestures like creatures of evil who would brew death draughts. The third time Ky-O stopped abruptly before the White Quiver. Her lip wrinkled back over her gums showing a few black, decaying tusks. Her nauseous, fetid breath, poisonous and foul-smelling as the miasma of dank swamps, fell upon him like a pestilence.

"Fools, fools, fools kissing over blood drip and bleaching bones!"

He heard the whispered words crackle in her throat. She was coming nearer, nearer. She was about to kiss him! The horror of it mastered him. That ghastly,

grinning mouth with its jagged fangs, its venom, its putrid breath, its words that were a curse, was about to meet his! He leaped to his feet, oblivious of the astounded gaze of the spectators, forgetting he was honored by his tribe and his Chief. One idea possessed him. If he received that serpent's sting the Dawn Mist was lost to him. He fled, headlong, frenzied to the point of madness, out into the night.

Rushing into the open he brushed against a man. It was the Owl Brave, who smiled mockingly as he watched his enemy's flight. And even as the White Quiver plunged into the woods to escape the torment that tore at his vitals he saw the wolf dog of Ky-O following close on his trail.

CHAPTER V.

ONE clear evening the sun set in a glory of light over the mountains. Delicate pink clouds like the scattered petals of celestial flowers, strewed the west. The afterglow of sunset faded into a dim, golden dream of day. On the border-land of the darkling blue and the tender yellow, where the sky showed pale-green, the luminous, gold-fringed Evening Star trembled out of the gathering dusk. The shadows lengthened, blue and mystical. The timber line showed in shadowy purple points along the mountains, when there appeared above that barrier, a slender, gilded bow. It was the crescent moon;—the signal for the chase. Thousands of eager eyes had watched for that sign and at sight of it thousands of hearts beat quick and thousands of lips murmured prayers to Co-co-

mik-e-t'sum, the Old Woman, for success in the coming hunt.

Camp fires spurted like blood into the darkness that night. The young men danced and sang in an abandon of excited joy.

When morning broke the city of tipis was no more. Lodges were struck, ponies saddled or hitched to travois and without confusion, in perfect order, like the soldiers of an army, the tribe made ready to march.

The sky was covered with smooth, pearly clouds through which the sun filtered, filling the world with luminous, reflected radiance. The drab prairie flowed away in a monotonous monochrome to the colorless horizon and on the mountains was a cold, metallic blue shadow.

Warriors, hunters and women mounted. Each chief took his place at the head of his band and the different bands of the I-kin-uh-kah-tsi or Societies of All Comrades, who were the officers of the Tri-

bal law, formed in regular order according to their rank. Suddenly, the sun, struggling with the enmeshing vapors, rent them with his lancing gold beams and flooded the transfigured earth with an amber dazzle of light. The prairie rippled and surged and flowed, a mighty still-born sea of gold, and to the West, rent and carved and shivered into heaven-daring towers and pinnacles, were the mountains of amethyst and silver,—the dwelling place of the gods.

Simultaneously, as though at the divine signal of Na-to-si himself, the vast column broke into motion and sound. Across the golden-green prairie the gaily-colored multitude rode, singing the camp-breaking song. On and on the pageant rolled; file by file its splendid detail flushed into full view, then passed into the kaleidoscopic perspective ahead, while another line, similar yet individually distinct, came into the foreground and took its place. In these momentarily revealed groups there were chiefs and

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warriors and hunters, women and even children, gorgeously arrayed in plumes and furs and costumes bright in color and intricate in design. The sun touched the responsive ornaments of dress and the polished steel of weapons and warmed into greater brilliance, the splendid splashes of crimson and green and tawny yellow. Ever and anon they passed between the throbbing blue sky and the gold-green earth, in the shadow of purple peaks that plunged into the lingering clouds. And ever and always from the lips of thousands, swelling now in a great, vibrant flood, then thinning to a plaintive minor key as haunting as the echo of a ghost chant out of the past, sounded the camp-breaking song.

Eagle Plume was surrounded by his family, his followers of the Brave Band and near him rode the wise men of the nation, the Pipe Stem men, bearing the sacred pipe and after them came the most distinguished chiefs.

The spirits of the Night Wind rose

into a veritable gale. His mount was the wildest pony of his father's herds. One moment the brute plunged and bucked with him, the next, it was off like an arrow, darting across the country while his master shrieked in an abandon of glee. No sane man could ride as this poor lad whose tempestuous soul was verily akin to the night wind for which he was named. His followers shouted applause and his fantastic antics made merriment all along the way. The Dawn Mist rode by her mother but she was silent and her thoughts were with the White Quiver, who followed with his fellows of the Mad Dogs. He led the Pinto Pony, the sacred Medicine Horse, that brought luck in the chase and in war. He was full of thoughts and dreams of daring and valor, the fruits of which would be his love offering to her.

Somewhere at the rear of the cavalcade, with the old, the infirm, the poor and the rabble of growling, fighting curs, came Ky-O with her wolf dog. The Owl

Brave left his own band, the Mosquitoes, many times to ride back and secretly speak with her and give her refreshments from his stores.

The tribe separated according to an arrangement previously planned by the chiefs and wise men. Some went to the north, others to the east and yet others took a middle course, but they kept within signal distance and when darkness settled thick and unbroken, slim columns of flame kindled on the mountain tops and the prairie. By these signal fires at night and the flashing of mirrors by day, each band knew where its tribal kindred were, if buffalo had been seen or not and if there were enemies lurking near.

It was on a crisp, frosty evening that the White Quiver sat watching the dark sky. How many sleeps, he thought, since he met the Dawn Mist by the singing waters! It was in reality not long, but the days drew themselves into intolerable lengths and his spirit chafed with inac-

tion. His great limbs were relaxed, his shoulders drooped a trifle and he gazed upward at the stars. From the top of a ridge of distant hills a tongue of flame darted high into the blackness. A second leaped up close beside it. The White Quiver rose to watch.

The inertia was gone and he stood tense and rigid peering into the night. Was there a third fire kindling? He strained to see but even his hawk eye could not determine if a new fire were building or if the second were merely spreading. Yes, there was a faint light,—but instantly it faded and was gone. His heartbeats were shaking his breast. His eyes were narrowed into two crescent-like lines. Again, a faint gleam pulsed and grew and lived! The Sun-God be praised! This was the signal for buffalo!

A mighty shout crashed through the silence. Young men began to dance and sing while the three red-gold columns of flame, with sparks shining like mock

stars in the sky, proclaimed the glorious news.

The party was in the saddle long before dawn and such of them as had no ponies, walked, spurred to unusual speed by the thought of the quarry that lay ahead. They proceeded silently, swiftly, a few scouts in advance to look for enemies. In the red glow of the sunrise they pressed on, on, on, never pausing except to water the thirsty horses in green, pellucid streams. The sun was in the center of the heavens, a radiant, flaming ball, when they came to the hilltop where the signals had burned. From this height they beheld, spread out beneath them in a small, mountain-locked valley a number of lodges. The White Quiver glanced restlessly over them until his eyes lighted on that of Eagle Plume. He saw the sacred pipe hung over the tipi door and by this he knew that the order had not yet been given to move. Some of the young men from the camp came up to meet him and his braves. Where

were the buffalo? In what numbers? And when would the chase begin? the White Quiver asked rapidly. The outrunners of Eagle Plume's band had located a large herd, just over yonder ridge, the young men replied. There were also signs of enemies, probably Kootenais. There had been much discussion over what course to pursue. The Owl Brave and a few young hot bloods had urged immediate descent upon the buffalo, but Eagle Plume, counciled by Wolf Medicine and the wise men, had delayed, believing that his numbers should be strong in case of sudden attack. He hoped not only to get buffalo in plenty, but to capture ponies from the Kootenais. Tracks of horses had been seen by the scouts and the need of the Piegans for mounts was next only to their need for meat. Many of their ponies had died during the period of drought and famine. The grass was good where the herd was feeding, so there was small chance of the buffalo leaving at once. Couriers kept watch and re-

ported every move of the animals to Eagle Plume. Now, however, the scattered bands were assembled and there was no further cause for delay.

The White Quiver and his braves presented themselves at the lodge of Eagle Plume where wise men and chiefs sat in grave discussion. The head chief welcomed them and bade them wait and listen.

The plan adopted was this: Early in the morning every warrior owning a horse would start for the valley in the hills. Those unmounted would follow on foot. Some young man, whose head was cool and whose horsemanship was unquestioned, would ride before the herd under the disguise of a buffalo robe. He would start the vast, living sea in the direction of a "pis'kun" or precipice which formed a natural trap, then the hunters would follow at breakneck speed, shooting as they went, and pursue the herd to the brink of the gorge where they would leap

to destruction. This having been determined, the sacred pipe was taken down, passed around in the course of the sun, then fixed on a tripod before the door, the direction indicating which way they would travel.

Who would lead the buffalo? The wise men pondered and deliberated.

The Owl Brave rose in council and said:

"Listen! for I speak the truth! I will lead the buffalo. I have a horse that is a good horse. He can run fast and his wind is sound. I promise you right here that I will lead the buffalo to the 'pis' kun.'"

He was scarcely seated when the White Quiver sprang to his feet.

"Hai ye, my fathers! Hear what is in my heart.

"You have made me a chief.

"Now allow me to lead the buffalo, so I may prove my courage.

"I have seen the days.

"I have watched the best riders lead the herds. I did not watch in vain. I will not fail.

"I have the Medicine of the Pinto horse. It is strong medicine. Without it there is no luck. You have seen this yourselves.

"I offer to you myself and the Pinto horse. It is for you to decide."

The Owl Brave darted at him a malevolent glance quick and angrily-bright as a lightning flash.

The war-cry burst involuntarily from the people. The White Quiver was right. He had spoken straight. There was no luck without the medicine of the Pinto horse, so it was decreed in council that the White Quiver, mounted on the Medicine pony, should lead the buffalo.

As the White Quiver left the council he caught sight of the Dawn Mist who waited outside. She had the look of a scared deer in her eyes.

"Under the three pines, by the heart-shaped rock on the hill, at moon rise, I

shall gather *pomme blanche,*" she whispered.

She vanished before he could answer, but those words sang in his soul.

A thin, gray cobweb of cloud spun its filmy skein across the evening sky. The sun sank and died in a passion of gold and crimson that faded into opal tones, which, in turn, were quenched in the twilight calm.

The White Quiver waited for the shielding shadow of night. When the yellow horn of the little moon glided out into the purple sky from behind the gossamer cloud, he started stealthily, under cover of the trees, to the tryst.

He did not know that he was following close on the track of the Owl Brave, who, likewise, cautious and muffled to the eyes, threaded his way in the same direction. As he advanced deeper into the wood, he fancied he heard a scream, but directly all was silent again. Finally after some search he came to three pines growing close together near a heart-shaped rock.

There he stopped and listened. It was a pleasant spot. Just before him a jagged eminence of stone lifted its giant crest against the sky. He had heard that somewhere near that rocky escarpment dwelt Ky-O, the grizzly bear. An owl hooted in the trees overhead. He had not waited long when the Dawn Mist ran out of the dark forest. She was trembling.

"I was here alone," she said. "There was a sound in the bushes and the Owl Brave stood before me. He saw me and I was afraid, for passion burnt red in his face. He grasped me in his arms. Look at these bruises! He kissed me,—and was gone!"

"Gone? Whence? I shall follow!"

"No, no, no. Not to-night. This is the eve before the hunt. Stay with me. I am afraid."

The White Quiver obeyed her. In silence he held her close to his breast.

"The time has been long," he whispered, "so long that my heart nearly died. If I make a fine kill of buffalo in the

chase, to-morrow at night fall I will tie the Pinto Pony to your father's lodge in offer for you."

"But one more moonrise, but one more sleep to wait."

"But one more,—unless the buffalo run too far."

"When I am your own, in your lodge, you will not leave me?"

"No!"

"O! White Quiver! Do you remember the words of the witch-woman, Ky-O? My heart tells me some awful spell will take me from you!" she cried.

"No enemy on earth, no evil spirit of the Great Darkness can keep us apart. . . . As your shadow follows you, I shall be forever with you," the White Quiver answered her.

"Our shadow is with us only when the sun shines. Where is it in the Night? It is the Night I fear! The Dark! O! . . ."

"I will follow you always, over the long trail to the Great White Desert."

There was a sound like a human step on the dry leaves.

"What is that noise?" the Dawn Mist cried in alarm, trembling like a wind-shaken reed.

"It is only your own heart-beats," the White Quiver answered, but he peered questioningly into the darkness and clasped the hilt of his knife.

CHAPTER VI

THE Owl Brave charged like an angry bull through the undergrowth. His course lay straight ahead, up towards the beetling cliffs of the mountain's ascent. The bushes and trees thinned and flakes of shale slid beneath his weight. Occasionally these struck little glints of flame, as though his fury kindled fire in the stones. Now he went more cautiously. His eye sought some landmark and he stopped more than once to observe minutely. After each pause he took up his search, scaling the slippery, naked cairns that frowned through the thickened dark. Two points of yellow burned in the night,—points of angry, dull-flame color that changed to green. A stealthy body slid from behind a boulder and a cold muzzle moved like a snail over the Owl Brave's hand. He

recognized the wolf-dog of Ky-O. The brute fawned before him, showed its sharp, white teeth in a capitulating, half-friendly snarl and led him to a small cunningly concealed opening in the cliff. He crawled in on his hands and knees, carrying his knife in his teeth, and found that a fair-sized chamber lay before him, lighted dimly by a smoldering fire and a torch of faggot. At first he could distinguish nothing but the red lights dancing with their grim partners, the shadows, but presently he saw Ky-O, crouching near the fire. She had been watching him silently and now that she caught his eye, broke into a wild, weird laugh.

"Kyi! is the wolf-hearted afraid, that he carries a knife in his teeth?" she asked.

He straightened himself as best he could in the low-roofed cave, sheathed his knife and stilled her with a quick gesture.

The hag observed him keenly during a silence so full of vibrant emotion that it seemed very long. She noted more by

instinct than visual sight, that he breathed fast and hard; that his chest heaved tumultuously; his fists were clenched, his jaws set and in his eyes burnt an unholy fire.

He came over to where she squatted, grasped her by the wrist in a grip so tight that she winced and cried:

"Listen! Listen! . . . Yonder, under the three pines, by the heart-shaped rock, I saw her.

"In her hands were roots of *pomme blanche*. She hunted the roots but she was watching, listening,—waiting. She lifted her head often, as a doe does when she is chased. . . . She was waiting for *him*,—the White Quiver.

"I rushed on her as the wind rushes, caught her,—so,—and felt her heart flutter like a snared bird's.

"I kissed her. . . .

"She screamed until the voice-spirits on the mountains answered her.

"I looked in her eyes and they told how she hated me.

"I let her go. She ran off in the bushes, crying. . . ."

Ky-O grunted gutturally and tried to release her arm.

"He is with her now. I see him through the dark. I feel him through the distance. They are together as they were that night by the fall of the Two Medicine, under the Rising Wolf."

She nodded and grunted again.

"They are alone. . . . Shall I kill him?"

"Fool! No! Kill him and you kill your future."

Silence settled in the cave, unbroken save for the snapping of bones in the wolf-dog's jaws.

"Speak," he exclaimed impatiently. "If you see through the flesh into the spirit, past to-day into to-morrow, tell me! Show me the blackest medicine that your dam, the she-bear taught you. I will use it. But give me the Dawn Mist. Give me vengeance upon the White Quiver."

"Come! Show them to me. We will watch. We will listen. We may learn something. But swear by Na-to-si, by Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, by Sach-Kum and by Ky-O, the breed of the great, gray bear, my kinsfolk, that you will obey me!"

"I swear!"

"Swear that if you see the Dawn Mist in his arms; if you see him taste the wild honey of her lips, you will make no sound or sign."

The Owl Brave cursed and stamped.

"Swear!"

"I . . . swear."

They stole silently down the mountain-side, Ky-O leaning on her staff. She was hampered with years, but no stone rattled beneath her step and no startled branch betrayed her presence. The wolf dog, not less stealthy than his mistress, trotted at her heels.

They came to a sudden halt. The sound of low, murmuring voices reached them through the pines. Scarcely breathing, advancing with the deliber-

ately tentative foot-fall of wildcats, they felt their way through the wood until three straight pines, growing in a small patch of open, came in view, lifting their black arms against the star-lit sky. Near the trees was a great red sandstone boulder shaped like a giant's heart. Close to this stood the White Quiver and the Dawn Mist. The pale, faint starlight streamed over them, shedding a silvery halo on their radiant faces and etherializing them until they shone like white spirits.

The night was windless and the atmosphere of that peculiar, vibrant clearness that carries the least sound. Somewhere off in the forest a dry limb crackled. An owl hooted in the intimate distance and a stream sang to the silence.

Ky-O and the Owl Brave heard the White Quiver whisper, each word piercing the quiet with the fine precision of a well-aimed arrow.

"The time has been long,—so long that my heart nearly died. If I make a fine

kill of buffalo in the chase, to-morrow, at night fall I will tie the Pinto Pony to your father's lodge in offer for you."

The Owl Brave shook in a huge convulsion of jealous rage. The White Quiver's breast was bare and lighted by the star-glow. He raised his spear and aimed. The clammy, crooked fingers of Ky-O closed on his arm. The spear fell noiselessly to earth. Again the voices reached their ears.

"But one more moonrise, but one more sleep to wait."

"But one more,—unless the buffalo run too far."

"When I am your own, in your lodge, you will not leave me?"

"No."

"O! White Quiver! Do you remember the words of the witch-woman, Ky-O? My heart tells me some awful spell will take me from you!"

"No enemy on earth, no evil spirit of the Great Darkness can keep us apart. . . . As your shadow follows you, I shall

be forever with you," the White Quiver answered her.

"Our shadow is with us only when the sun shines. Where is it in the Night? It is the Night I fear! The Dark! O! . . ."

"I will follow you always, over the long trail to the Great White Desert."

The Owl Brave took a quick step forward.

A dead twig snapped with vicious and exaggerated noise.

The White Quiver and the Dawn Mist were alert, listening.

Once more the damp, calloused hand of Ky-O arrested him. He felt her hot, noisome breath on his cheek as she whispered:

"Come!"

"What now?" the Owl Brave demanded, once they were within the fire-lit chamber. "You have seen and heard."

"She did not answer at once. She replenished the fire, filled and lighted her pipe and squatted on the rocky floor,

warmed her claw-fingers at the blaze and appeared to be lost in meditation.

By the growing firelight the interior of the cave showed more plainly than before, though its farther walls were shrouded in secret shadow. Bunches of pungent-smelling herbs were fastened with thongs to sharp projections in the rock, and on the floor, which was sprinkled with damp earth, were the fresh tracks and dung of a monster bear.

The Owl Brave was filled with bitter reflections. He was paying the price of delay. Before the White Quiver's triumph and his own failure on Chief Mountain, he had been first among the young braves in Eagle Plume's favor. He had many gallant *coups* to his credit. He had distinguished himself on the war-path against the Kootenais and the Sioux and he was still young. Nor was he unpleasant to look upon. His hawk-beak nose was too sharply prominent to be handsome, his small, bright, restless eyes were set a trifle too close together, and

his lip had a cruel curl, but these slight defects were offset by a finely-built body and a haughty carriage that marked him with distinction.

Why had he not asked for the Dawn Mist in the mid-day of his success? Eagle Plume would not have denied her to him. His own heart answered the question. He had not dared to brave her hatred. She had always shrunk away from him as though he were a poisonous thing,—a crawling snake or a spider with mortal sting. And because he had allowed a coward's fear of a young girl to influence him, he had lost that which his whole being desired with hot, consuming lust. His passion, more intense because it had been long suppressed, had grown into a terrible, devouring thing that would possess even if in that awful possession it destroyed. Now he was driven to seek the aid of magic through the witch-woman, Ky-O.

"Hai ye," he exclaimed impatiently after a long silence.

"OWL BRAVE . . . A FINELY BUILT BODY AND A HAUGHTY CARRIAGE MARKED HIM WITH DISTINCTION."

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"Something is coming,—here," she answered, tapping her forehead.

"Speak!"

He bent over her, sucking in his breath in little, harsh gasps.

The old woman's face became cunning. She leered at him, assumed an air of abject misery, the meaning of which he knew well, and said:

"I am poor,—so poor. Show me what you will give."

He was prepared. Stooping and opening a bundle, he displayed some beads, a brass kettle, pelts of weasel, otter, beaver and lynx. He held each piece up for her to see, then she took it, felt of it, scrutinized, smelt of it and sometimes even bit it. Each article she returned to the heap on the floor. She whined all the while. At last she shrugged her shoulders and shook her head.

"What do you mean," the Owl Brave asked.

"Not enough," she whimpered. "You have many horses, hides, beads, feathers.

I have nothing. I am poor. You are a great warrior with your belly full of meat. I am like the mole, grubbing roots in the dark. You want the Dawn Mist. I have the medicine that can get her for you. If I give you that medicine you must pay me."

"Kyi! Pay! You would strip the flesh off my bones! Suck my blood!"

She did not notice him, but continued rubbing her hands, rocking to and fro, whimpering softly, under her breath.

"I am poor. . . . It takes the life of my old body . . . to make such strong medicine . . . I am so poor . . . so poor . . . so poor."

The Owl Brave muttered a curse.

"You do not speak straight," he said, raising his fingers to his lips, and making a straight line. "Your words are crooked. You tell me you are poor. That is a lie. You are richer than Eagle Plume. As dogs bury bones you have treasure hidden under the rocks.

"Half-man! Toad-spawn! Squaw-

hearted coward!" she shrieked in a terrible treble. She flew at him in fanatic fury, cursed him, called him every vile name her lash-sharp tongue could utter and invoked upon him the blackest evil of the powers accursed.

"Take back that lie," she screamed, "or by my dam, the Great Bear, I'll go to the White Quiver and tell him all!"

After awhile he quieted her by turning the matter into a jest. But even after the tempest of her passion had subsided, she trembled at intervals, looking at him distrustfully and whispered to herself.

"See what I have brought you," he said.

She gloated over the heap of stuff with the lust of a miser, shaking her head and whining:

"No, no, no. The medicine of the Pinto horse is strong. Mine must be stronger. It will take time. It will take strength. It . . ."

"What do you want," he broke in. "You are like your brother, the grizzly,

who preys and gorges and is never satisfied. Your maw is bottomless, she-bear. The pelts are fine. This otter,—look at the fur. . . ."

"No. The skin is poor."

She bickered and haggled over each hide and trinket.

"You take all I have," he cried desperately. "You strip me. You rob me. It is I who am poor. What more do you want. Tell me!"

"A horse."

"A horse! I have but one."

"You had,—so many," she answered, checking off five on her crooked fingers.

"I had; but two are dead and two I traded. I have only one."

"You can buy another. Give me your horse."

"Never! You would have me go afoot with the squaws and children and old men. He would ride past me on his Pinto Pony and laugh. Never!"

Ky-O was silent.

Something slimy and chill moved along

his hand. He started and looked on the damp floor beside him. A snake slid past, the red fire illuminating his scales until they shone like gems. It was the Owl Brave who spoke, finally:

"Come," he said, altering his voice to a conciliatory tone. "Be fair. What do you want, mother?"

A hideous smile distorted her face.

"What do *you* want,—the Dawn Mist or your horse?" she asked in return.

"Will nothing but my horse do? A warm garment of buckskin,—beaded,—moccasins,—"

"No, nothing."

"But the chase,—I must ride in the chase."

"When you go to the chase in the morning, you may ride the horse if you bring him back sound to me."

"Then it is yours. But you answer to me with your life for my success."

They talked in low tones for many hours, he listening attentively, the expression of his face changing, as, partly in

words, partly by signs, she unfolded to him as much of her plans as she wished him to know. When this was done, she went to the kettle swinging on the tripod over the fire, filled a small gourd bowl with dark liquid, which she dipped out by means of a buffalo-horn spoon.

"Drink!" she commanded.

He choked and gasped and all but strangled with the bitterness of the draught, but she stood over him muttering incantations and making signs and he dared not disobey her, lest the spell be broken.

A wonderful exhilaration stimulated him to gaiety and a warm glow ran through his veins, even to the tips of his fingers which had been icy cold. Then Ky-O began to speak softly and he to harken with bated breath, until the fumes of that bewitched potion penetrated his brain. He fancied that the old woman vanished and in her place appeared a grizzly bear; that a great muzzle was thrust close to his face and a low, deep

growl shook the cavern. Then came a giddy confusion of things and he knew not nor cared if he were awake or enmeshed in dreams. . . .

He was aroused by Ky-O, who plucked at him, shook him and shrilled in his ear:

"The dawn is climbing the sky! Be up! Be off! Quick!"

He sprang to his feet, dazed. As soon as he could shake the cloud from his brain he was hurrying down the mountain side. In the growing light he saw shadowy figures moving, and he knew that Eagle Plume was assembling his hunters for the chase.

CHAPTER VII

THE camp was a scene of confusion. Warriors and hunters were arming themselves and saddling their ponies. Children ran hither and thither shouting, women hastened to and fro to help their lords, and the excitement, being all-pervading, spread even to the mongrel dogs who barked at nothing and ran wildly about in sheer exuberance of spirits. The call of a herald and the snatch of a war or hunting song sounded now and again. The knowing ponies were no less impatient than their masters; they whinnied shrilly and stamped in proof of mettle.

The Owl Brave gained his lodge. The few who saw him coming believed he had been out for his early morning plunge and thought no more of the incident. Once within the tipi he hurriedly gath-

ered his shield and weapons. His brain was strangely clear and quick. He realized that this was the occasion upon which hung the issue of his life. Fragmentary thoughts and emotions flashed through his consciousness like summer lightning, then were lost. The White Quiver would be in great peril, he said to himself. He had seen this thing of leading the buffalo done many times before. Had he been mad when he desired the honor for himself? His enemy might be trampled beneath thousands of grinding hoofs (and here the Owl Brave smiled ever so slightly) or what could be more likely than that *somebody's* arrow aimed at one of the foremost of the herd, should go just ahead of the mark? Who could be blamed for such an accident? Then, as always, his thoughts turned to the Dawn Mist and he recalled the death-hate in her eyes. With curious deliberation, he looked over his arrows one by one, felt the keen edge of his spear and the dagger at his side.

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Above the confused jangle of noises he could hear the sonorous call of a herald who rode through the camp, crying:

"Listen! Listen! The Great Chief, Eagle Plume, commands every warrior and hunter to be ready. The time is come to go to the buffalo!"

The Owl Brave was just finishing his preparations, when the wolf dog of Ky-O slipped into his lodge. He knew that the beast's mistress was near. She followed quickly upon the steps of her pet, leaning heavily on her staff. She and the Owl Brave exchanged a few hurried whispers. She took from her bosom a little bag and handed it to him.

"Wear it," she commanded, "it is your medicine."

He fastened the trinket about his neck, then hastened off to join the assembling warriors.

The mounted hunters and those afoot were waiting outside the lodge of Eagle Plume. The chief had not yet appeared. In a moment the lodge door opened and

he issued forth with Wolf Medicine, the Pipe Stem man and some of the ancient wise men. Following close behind were the Tall Pine and the Dawn Mist. The Night Wind was already mounted on a bucking pony, tormenting the poor beast into a frenzy for the amusement of the laughing crowd.

As Eagle Plume came into view with his attendants, the Owl Brave forgot all else. He looked with fierce inquiry at the Dawn Mist who had not even seen him, and watched her glance travel arrow-swift and true to a certain point among the horsemen. He followed the direction of her eyes and saw that they were wedded in amorous gaze with those of the White Quiver.

The signal was given. The chafing ponies sprang forward. The chase was begun.

The White Quiver reined in his Pinto horse until the creature's neck curved like a bow. He rode very slowly so that he soon fell to the rear. Turning around

in his saddle, he looked and saw the Dawn Mist standing apart, quite alone. Through the increasing distance he could feel her eyes searching him out, could receive and interpret their message of love, fearful and yearning. Her lips moved and he felt, rather than heard, the whispered word, *"Nó-ma!"*

"Nó-ma," my husband! The magic of it caused his brain to reel. In that moment, without reason and in sheer madness, he was overpowered by the desire to return to her. For the second something in his soul told him to go back in spite of everything and clasp her to his breast. A shout sounded in his ears. His companions were calling to him. With the reality of their voices, reason awoke and he spurred the Pinto Pony into a break-neck run. His future and hers depended on this day; he must win glory in order to claim her as his wife. Still he looked back; looked again and yet again until she appeared to be a mere fleeting wraith-shape of the dawn, unearthly, unreal as

the gossamer mists of morning which glide out of nothing and melt into nothingness again. Once more he looked, but she had vanished as absolutely as though swallowed in the blue abyss of space. . . .

The scouts, who rode somewhat in advance of the main body of hunters, were soon lost to sight over the swelling hills. The sun was well up in his azure course when these outrunners were seen riding back at full gallop. They reported to Eagle Plume that when his band came to the crest of the next considerable hogback, the buffalo could be seen feeding in a small pocket in the hills which the hunters would enter through a narrow gap. The winds were asleep so there was no danger of a gossiping breeze carrying the hateful scent of man to the herd. They proceeded cautiously and slowly as they neared the hilltop and thence from behind a screen of small second-growth pines, looked down on the grazing animals. There was never a murmur, never

a stir among Eagle Plume's men. Bright red, recalescent spots burned on their cheeks and their eyes shone as with kindling fires. The country opened up in a vast panorama. Beneath, the hills swept away in a mighty ebb, from a small, fertile valley, watered by a willow-fringed stream where deep succulent grass brushed the black-horns' paunches. Voluptuously full-breasted hills rose from the valley's lap, enclosing it on all sides but one, where a gap showed the dim tracery of more magnificent distances. And here in this valley, extending up the russet uplift of the hills, were the buffalo, their countless legions flowing like the waters of a black sea over the face of the land. Through the tense silence sounded the crisp tearing of grass, and now and again the deep bellow of a bull. Over the dark, compact mass of the buffalo, birds circled and dipped and perched on the monster backs of the oblivious, feeding animals. The mellow, amber sun of autumn flowed out of the

blue depths of the sky, over hill and valley, buffalo and hovering birds. Nothing could have been more magnificently pastoral. Even in the enormous restrained energy of those splendid thousands there was the awful peace of a calm sea or of mountain solitudes.

Eagle Plume gave the signal. Wolf Medicine advanced solemnly with the sacred pipe. In sight of the herd, before the expectant hunters, he smoked and made his prayer to Na-to-si, the Sun, Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, the Moon and Sach-Kum, the Mother Earth, then the pipe was held with the stem towards the buffalo and finally passed from mouth to mouth among the braves. There was a pause. Eagle Plume called the White Quiver to him and spoke in whispers and signs. The wise men drew over the young chief a huge bison robe which concealed him completely and covered the body of the Pinto horse. He leaned low on the pony's neck, the head of the buffalo hide extending out to the horse's ears.

Then, very deliberately, skirting around the basin in the light undergrowth, he issued into the open before the herd, imitating the sound of a bull. The heavy heads raised slowly. The White Quiver looked back from beneath his disguise and saw the thousand black eyes glow, the moist nostrils quiver while the dripping jaws still crushed the juicy grass and the munching lips foamed green. But in that look he saw something which distracted his attention even from that terrible spectacle. It was a snow-white form among the black! Could it be the sacred white buffalo prized above all things earthly, the killing of which set its slayer over the soothsayers and wise men? He could see but part of the animal as it grazed behind its fellows, but he moved a trifle forward and slightly to one side, never forgetting his part of decoy and uttering from time to time the sound of the bull which he had learned so well. From this position he could see more plainly. It was true. There was,

indeed, among the dusky hosts one pure, white buffalo. Still he dared not uncover to shoot or to be forgetful for one passing moment of the desperate part he played. There was a movement in the herd. One huge bull came forward with lowered head and raised tail. Another and another followed their leader. The White Quiver urged his pony on, on, toward the gap in the hills, beyond which lay the "pis-kun" or precipice. He could see a tremor like a wind-ripple on calm waters run through the herd. Faster and faster rolled the black billows, louder and louder roared the thundering hoofs, more terrible pealed the mad bellow of bulls. Denser and more smothering became the cloud of dust that followed them. The living flood had started on its awful, resistless course; the fleshly avalanche poured down, sweeping away and annihilating everything in its path.

The White Quiver was riding for his life. He leaned low and level over the Pinto Pony's neck and gave the fleet-

footed creature full rein, whispering affectionate, urging words in its ears. An infuriated bull charged at him but by a dexterous turn he wheeled aside while the brute tore past. He could feel the hot breath of the buffalo upon him, feel the ground tremble beneath the fury of their onslaught, see the wicked, crescent shaped horns lowered to gore and the sharp, cleaving hoofs cutting into the earth. He knew once they overtook him he was doomed.

Still, with death at his heels he never lost sight of the sacred white buffalo. He would stake his life on that kill. Once he could be sure of his aim he would shoot, but not until then. He was certain that his companions were in full pursuit and before they spied his prize he must strike. As he flew wind-swift, barely a spear's throw ahead of the stampeded herd, a missile whizzed close to his head and struck the ground. It was an arrow! Someone was shooting ahead of the mark!

He urged the pony on faster, faster, until his limbs quivered beneath the strain and the sweat showed in white foam over his body.

"Kyi! hurry, hurry, Nis-kun, my little brother, my brave one," the White Quiver whispered and the gasping horse responded in a desperate spurt of speed.

To the left of the buffaloes' unalterable course was a small butte and just beyond, overhung by blue, autumnal haze, lay the abyss. The White Quiver was riding towards that butte. If he could gain it he was saved. If not he was lost. The White buffalo had been crowded in that direction, too, which was, happily, further removed from the pursuing huntsmen, who were shooting ahead of the herd.

Again and again a single bull with flaming eyes and lowered head, charged out from the main body of that flying column, and pursued the White Quiver; again and again the singing arrows darted

past and buried their pointed noses in the prairie. Why was it that they were always wide of the mark? They were following him. *Someone was aiming at him!*

"Faster, Nis-kun, little brother, faster for our lives! A traitor is shooting at us! A moment more and we shall be saved!"

The Pinto Pony seemed to understand. Sobbing for breath, trembling with exhaustion, he plunged ahead.

The White Quiver turned to look back but in the panorama of calm hills and hurtling flesh rolling past, he could distinguish no one of his people. There were some horsemen speeding along but he could not recognize any individual. He was now nearing the butte and the slight swell in the land gave him an advantage in his view of the buffalo. His prize was close to the edge of the flying legions,—that edge which swept like a stormy tide around his refuge, the butte. From the upland, the gorge was in full

sight. He could see the sheer drop of that rock wall over which the herd would plunge to death. He was on the verge of safety. He felt the cool touch of odorous balsam pine brush his forehead when an arrow cut into his left arm near the shoulder, leaving a deep, blood-spurting gash in the flesh.

In another moment he was under cover. Oblivious to the pain from his wound he watched, scarce breathing, for the spot of white, like a solitary foam-flake on a stormy black sea. He could mark it plainly now. It was approaching. It was on the very rim of the wood. He waited. He aimed deliberately and shot once, twice. The white buffalo lurched, fell, and a stream of red stained its snowy fur just under the shoulder blade. He had shot it in the most coveted place.

In that moment of triumph he forgot the devouring arrows, the pursuing herd, the sharp pang of his wound and thought only of the glory he had won for the Dawn Mist and of his last, half-fantastic,

weirdly unreal glimpse of her. And even now in the heat of triumph that memory smote him with a haunting fear he could not understand.

He stanched his wound at a little stream in the woods and remained under shelter with the Pinto Pony, keeping watch over the body of the white buffalo, while the rest of the hunters circled onward in hot pursuit, closing in on the rear of the herd and driving it relentlessly towards the gorge. The maddened beasts, prodded by arrow-shots and spear thrusts, with the hideous war-cry in their ears, the eager riders hounding their rear, and the new-sprung breeze carrying the abominable scent of man full into their distended nostrils, tore on. Suddenly the vast lips of the gorge opened, showing its silver-tongued stream, whose mighty clamor was silenced by the more thunderous roar of crashing hoofs. Still the buffalo did not hesitate nor turn. The awful force of their velocity was not to be checked nor swerved and the living sea

broke in a huge cataract and poured its fleshly flood over the cliff to destruction.

The victorious hunters, with exultant cries, dashed up close in the wake of their prey. In the mad leap over the escarpment, some of the animals caught in brush and trees and others, hurled with greater force, lay quivering in their death throes, in the bottom of the gorge. The prairie was dotted with the huge, black bulks of carcasses which had been shot during the running. Already the skinning had begun and the half-starved people ate of the warm hearts as they cut them from the palpitating bodies.

Eagle Plume surveyed the wonderful scene. Pride and happiness shone beneath the stony mask of calm he was wont to wear. The prophecy of the Wind-God was fulfilled. Here was meat in plenty for the winter. The tribe was saved.

In a few hours the men and women afoot came up and there was wild revelry. Each family, whether its lord had participated in the hunt or through the mis-

fortune of having no horse, had been forced to follow unmounted, would receive its full portion of meat, so there was abundance and happiness in every lodge. With wonderful skill and dispatch men and squaws skinned the animals, cut the bodies in sections and loaded them on travois to be taken back to camp. Numbers of people were at work getting the carcasses from the gorge. The meat must be collected quickly for in a single night the coyotes and bears and timber wolves would strip the bones bare.

The Night Wind rode precariously on the verge of the declivity and more than once the rotten rock crumbled and the hind hoof of his pony hung for a second over the brink. The Night Wind laughed wildly. The abandon of excitement in the chase, the red slaughter and now the hypnotic, seductively beautiful space below, reposeful with the terrible calm of after-death, filled him with savage joy.

"I know you!" he shouted into the hazy

spaces, "Your maw is full of dead things now, yet you are not satisfied. Your song is sweet and you are lovely under your purple veil but you cannot fool me! Ah! no! I am not afraid of you but I am not ready to come to your couch of stone to-day, Lady Ravine!"

"Where is the White Quiver? Who has seen him?" asked Eagle Plume.

No one could answer. The last time the hunters had noticed him was when he was riding towards a wooded butte to escape the on-rushing herd. The Owl Brave was among those who kept near Eagle Plume. He had not seen the White Quiver, he said. He had lost sight of him early in the day. Eagle Plume was troubled and announced that if the young chief did not appear soon, he would despatch a party from the Mad Dog Society to search for him.

There was a rumor of a white buffalo having been discovered, then lost among the band. Some affirmed this stoutly and others were as certain that it was not so.

The subject created much interest and those who descended into the ravine looked carefully for the body of the sacred beast. Someone suggested that although there might, indeed, have been a white buffalo, it had perhaps changed form as those wonderful creatures occasionally did, and thus escaped unharmed.

They were still speaking of this when the White Quiver was seen approaching. He walked slowly, leading the Pinto horse by the bridle, and down his left arm trickled a stream of blood. Eagle Plume, himself, went forward to meet him.

"What has befallen you?" he asked. "I was sending six young men of the Mad Dog Band to search for you."

The White Quiver was weak from loss of blood. He pointed to his arm.

"I was shot and the horse was jaded," he answered, after a moment, "but these things are nothing. I have killed a young, white buffalo cow. Will you and Wolf Medicine and the patriarchs return

with me to the wooded butte and see the kill?"

A great cry arose,—a cry of incredulous wonder and admiration. Eagle Plume saluted him with deep respect, Wolf Medicine, chief of the wise men, paid him homage, the stories of other hunts which the old warriors had been telling died on their lips. By one deed the White Quiver had taken precedence over them all, for to kill the sacred buffalo was greater than victory on the war-path, more glorious than a hundred brilliant *coups*.

The Owl Brave, who had clung to Eagle Plume, winced as one who had been dealt a sudden blow. In his heart he cried: "The Sun-God wither his soul!" but his tightened lips spoke not and he turned silently and went his way.

Though the White Quiver was faint he would take no rest. Wolf Medicine bathed and bound his wound, and applied to it the healing balm of medicine herbs from his bundle. He also made

prayers to the Sun for the young chief's recovery. Then mounting a fresh horse the White Quiver led Eagle Plume, Wolf Medicine and the patriarchs with a few picked hunters to the butte where the white buffalo lay. The Pipe Stem men made offerings to the Sun, the Moon and the Mother Earth and after this solemn ceremony, the carcass was skinned and the hide carried with reverent care back to the temporary camp at the verge of the precipice.

The shadows were growing gray and long and the sun hung low over the mountain tops. The day of the great hunt was drawing to a close.

Eagle Plume ordered the hunters to remain where they were. They could not leave the rich kill, therefore they must stay and keep watch. In one single night beasts of prey would devour the winter's supply of meat, or there might be enemies lurking near, ready to attack and despoil them.

Eagle Plume, with a small band, in-

cluding Wolf Medicine, prepared to ride back to the main camp. The people, half-delirious with joy, called upon the White Quiver to stay and be master of the feast which was to last all night, but he, having a single thought and desire, joined the followers of Eagle Plume and set out for camp.

When they finally galloped off the dusk had fallen. Fires were springing up and there was the sound of loud laughter and singing. Over every fire portions of buffalo meat were roasting and until the pale dawn should stalk like a gray wolf over the skies, there would be feasting and revelry.

But the White Quiver, he who was proclaimed hero for the second time, felt glad to escape the merry-making. His uneasy thoughts were with the Dawn Mist and he pictured her again and again as he had seen her last, vanishing like a wraith shape in the early morn, breathing on the light-winged wind the single word:

"No-'mal"

CHAPTER VIII

NIGHT had settled thick and dark with a cold sprinkling of stars to light the way, when Eagle Plume, with the White Quiver riding beside him, gained the main camp. The White Quiver proudly bore with him his glorious trophy of the chase,—the snowy hide of the young buffalo cow and trotting close beside him, seeming conscious of the honor he had helped his master to win, was the Pinto horse.

Dogs barked loudly at the sound of riders galloping by night and startled faces peered out of the lodges. The news of the great kill spread fast. The lanes among the tipis were soon swarming with eager, cheering women, children and old men, but the young chief caught no glimpse of her for whom he had dared

and done all. In vain his restless eyes threaded the mazes of the lodges and scanned each face as it appeared in the light of flaming torch and camp fire. She was not there.

The Tall Pine advanced to welcome her lord and his retinue. Her face was full of anxiety. The Dawn Mist lay sick on her couch, she said, else she, too, would have come to greet her father and the White Quiver. She greatly feared that some spell had been cast over her daughter. She urged Wolf Medicine to come at once to her aid.

A terrible depression settled like a black cloud over the White Quiver. He, whose heart had beat with pride but a few moments ago, was jaded and inert. The lash of the frosty wind had a new sting which smote his wound; the glad shouts of the people withered in his ears; their smiles bleared into grimaces and he saw everywhere only the reflection of his own disappointment. Without her there could be no glory nor happiness and he

was resolved to endure the torture of separation from her no longer.

Eagle Plume made a brief speech telling his subjects that in one day his hunters had killed enough meat to feed the tribe for four or five moons; that the Sun-God had been with them, guiding their arrows and speeding their horses; that the young chief, White Quiver, had bravely led the herd to the brink of the abyss and he had further glorified himself and his nation by killing a young white buffalo cow. He promised that as soon as the tribe was assembled again they should feast for three days.

Meantime he had his young men distribute portions of meat that they had brought in the different lodges, and bade them all eat until their bellies were full.

Then he retired to his lodge and the White Quiver, escaping from those who would have claimed him, sought his own humble tipi and lay down on his couch.

It was late when the sounds of merriment ceased. A herald of the night

guard rode through the camp and ordered stragglers to their quarters. He waited until all was still, then he rose and went out in the cool night. No living creature stirred. Even the trees were asleep and the tired stars began to nod. He went very cautiously to where the Pinto Pony was picketed.

"Little Brother, little brother," he whispered, stroking the horse's velvet-soft nose, "I am going to give you away!"

The pony whinnied and gently rubbed his nose over his master's breast. Then the White Quiver led him to the lodge of Eagle Plume and tied him there. The young man returned to his own tipi, brought forth the precious white hide and laid it before the lodge of the Great Chief.

This done, he sighed and after pausing a moment to listen, crept back to his tipi. As he neared the threshold he stopped with a start. The wolf dog of Ky-O was slinking in the shadow. An awful curse fell from his lips and he sprang at the beast but it had vanished before he could

reach it. Why, he asked himself in impotent fury, should that accursed thing of evil cross his path at this supreme hour of his life?

He lay down on his couch and tossed feverishly until at last the heaviness of fatigue quieted him and he slept. Yet his sleep was oppressed with dreams. He was riding, riding, riding over hopeless wastes leading a herd of buffalo to a fathomless abyss. And among the herd was a young white buffalo cow which he risked his life to kill. But as he shot and the arrow pierced the creature's hide, dealing a death wound he saw that it was the Dawn Mist he had killed and Ky-O who appeared suddenly laughed at him and cried:

"You have slain your love! Fools, fools, fools kissing over blood drip and bleaching bones!"

He awoke with a start and the cold sweat streamed from his body. His heart beats choked him and over him was the heaviness of impending disaster.

The tipi was flooded with the tender light of the new day.

Were those shouts,—that confusion,—a lingering hallucination or reality? What was it they were saying? Captured—stolen—Who? What? He was out in the open with one huge bound. People were crowding together and gesticulating. He ran straight to the lodge of Eagle Plume, which was surrounded by excited men and women.

"What has happened, O! Chief?" he cried.

"My child,—the Dawn Mist is gone! She was stolen from her couch, spirited from my lodge while we slept! We have all become old women!"

"Stolen! Who has dared?—The Dawn Mist stolen!"

"A band of the enemy must have approached in the night and carried her away."

The Tall Pine crouched in a corner rocking herself to and fro and mourning:

"My daughter! My lovely One!" she cried.

The White Quiver was stricken dumb. For that moment he ceased to live. He breathed in short, sibilant gasps, but his eyes were fixed and stolid as those of an ox and his mighty body was rigid as one seized with catalepsy. People came and went but they seemed far away and detached from his consciousness and their voices reached him as from distant hill-tops.

He stood thus, impaled with sorrow, until at length Eagle Plume, who had been absorbed with the grief which his proud spirit would not let him show, noted the young man's strange condition. The Great Chief's calm face expressed surprise, then pity. He laid his hand on the White Quiver's shoulder.

"I did not know, my son. Is it true,—you love her?"

The White Quiver roused himself.

"You did not know," he answered, "when I offered you my all, the Pinto

Pony and the white buffalo hide, for her?"

"When?"

"Before dawn."

"Then, they, too, have been stolen. All is lost!"

"No! Not lost, by the Sun-God! I will pursue the dogs who have taken her and leave not a scalp amongst them. I will follow her and bring her back or join her in the Great White Desert!"

The White Quiver uttered these words in a mighty passion of resolve. His courage and hope had ebbed as ebbs the sea's tide and now they rushed at the flood, sweeping even grief before them. He felt himself possessed of wonderous strength and he was as an armed host.

CHAPTER IX

THE White Quiver and a small band of scouts set out and while daylight lasted they examined the country about the camp, traveling in a great circle and following every track, yet in spite of the best efforts of their keen senses they could find no trace of the Dawn Mist and her captors. Eagle Plume and his young men, the Owl Brave and his party and several other expeditions had been searching, but at dark all returned baffled and dismayed. If she had risen in a breath of mist and then been dissolved by the sun, she could not have disappeared more mysteriously or completely.

Eagle Plume despatched riders to the temporary camp at the gorge to report the loss of his daughter and to urge every warrior to immediate action. No one

there had seen any sign of the enemy or of her, though it was known that a band of Kootenais had camped not far away. Gloom fell over the people, and the return of the tribe was not as a triumphal procession such as had been planned, but as a body of mourners. The Dawn Mist was beloved and moreover she was the child of renowned parents, so her loss was felt in a double sense. Some of the women shaved their hair, painted their faces black or gashed themselves with knives in token of grief, and as the long, scattered column came over the hills and down towards the lodge of the Great Chief, bearing with them the rich harvest of flesh, there was only the sound of wailing, rising fitfully above the clatter of horses' hoofs.

The Night Wind was entirely maddened by the shock. His sister and himself had always enjoyed a strange and close companionship. Who would go with him now, on his rambles in the forests and tell him tales of the woodland

folk? She knew each flower and tree and stream and mountain; knew the flying hosts of clouds and what the west wind told the pines. Besides, she was the one link between himself and the world of men. Only through the medium of her sympathy could he understand their thoughts. The period of the hunt had been one of desperate excitement for him, and now, completely distraught, he clung to his mother and was at once her sorrow and her comfort.

The White Quiver returned from the empty search and retired to his lodge. He sat on his couch, his arms folded across his knees, his face hidden on them and his robe thrown over his head. Darkness fell but he did not stir. People came to his threshold and called but he did not hear and they dared not disturb his solitary self-communion. Dawn pulsed through the blackness and found him still sitting, motionless as a statue of bronze. His whole being was shaping itself into one supreme resolve, which,

henceforth would dominate his life. As the sun rose red in the east and filled the lodge with ruddy light, he stood erect and very calmly walked out into the young day. The air was clear and cold. He breathed deeply of it and felt its pristine vigor tingle in his blood. Frost sparkled coldly on the ground and wove shimmering patterns on the bunch grass and the sage. The snowy peaks flushed rose in the dawn.

The White Quiver presented himself to Eagle Plume who was closeted with Wolf Medicine. The Chief, who had not deigned to allow paternal emotion to disturb his outward serenity, was suddenly old. Deep lines had seamed his face over night, and his eyes, sunken back into his head, wandered restlessly. Wolf Medicine and the other wise men had been constantly interceding with the Sun since the Dawn Mist disappeared, but thus far the Great Mystery had made no revelation.

The White Quiver stood before them

and they felt in his presence the tremendous power of restrained force that lay beneath his noble calm.

He waited until Eagle Plume bade him speak.

"O! Chief!

"I have come to ask the quest of your daughter, the Dawn Mist. I will go out into the world and seek her. I shall take no rest or pleasure until I find her or die for her."

Eagle Plume looked at him long and earnestly, then replied:

"Go! White Quiver! You have done brave deeds. I have faith in you. I have sworn to the Sun that whosoever finds my child shall possess her in marriage. May she be yours!"

The White Quiver bowed low, then turned to Wolf Medicine.

"I would speak with you, Wolf Medicine," he said. "Before I go I would make my spirit strong. I wish to bear the torture, to fast for four suns in the great loneliness and dream for power.

When I return I will take my young men and go on the war-path."

Wolf Medicine answered:

"White Quiver! What you wish to undertake few dare to do. If it is your will, go, and I shall give you a sacred pipe for dreams."

Eagle Plume took the hand of the White Quiver in both of his and said:

"*No-ko-i,*—my son!"

It was decided that the skull of the white buffalo, which had been carefully saved, should be used as the instrument of torture to fortify the soul of the young warrior, even as it mortified his flesh. Having purified himself with the sweat bath he bared his broad back where the muscles swelled in welts of manly strength, then with ceremonies and invocations, in the presence of a goodly assembly of people, principally his own band, the Wolf Medicine unwrapped the sacred Pipe Stem, took a sharp knife, made two deep gashes over each shoulder-blade and raised the flesh in broad strips. The

sweat stood in beads on the tense body of the White Quiver but he made no sound or sign. Blood ran in crimson streams from his wounds and dripped on the ground. A sigh breathed from the spectators. The White Quiver neither winced nor trembled nor did his stony expression change. He was apparently the most indifferent of them all. Wolf Medicine continued his work with constant chants and invocations. The skull of the buffalo cow painted half-black and half-red was brought and to it were attached two long, stout, leather thongs. Every knot was tested carefully, then a wooden skewer was passed under the loose strips of flesh on the White Quiver's shoulders and to this the end of each thong was tied with precision and relentless care. When this was done a pipe with which to woo the Dream was fixed in his belt. Around his neck hung a sacred medicine whistle made of bone from the wild goose's wing.

He clasped his hands rigidly behind him and flung his face upwards toward

the sun. His lips moved in prayer, then, like a bull that gathers strength to charge, without looking to the right or to the left, he lowered his head, the thews of his legs sprang up like things of steel and he started off across the hushed ripples of the hills.

Every eye followed him and masses of people watched in heavy silence until his toiling figure lessened in the distance and finally vanished. Then they parted into small groups and spoke together in low tones.

Meantime the White Quiver went on, now plodding stolidly as an ox, again leaping defiantly in a frenzy of pain when his burden caught on a protruding root or rock. No matter what he did,—whether he trod with measured step or flung himself wildly into the air, the thongs remained mercilessly fixed even though he felt his flesh tear and the blood start afresh. The prairie stretched out before him, tawny as a lion's hide, broken only by seared scatterings of bunch grass,

hoary gray wormwood, prickly pear abloom with moon-like flowers and whitish patches of alkali. Hanging low over the dry earth was a thick purplish vapor that painted the distant vistas with royal hues. Far away, jutting sharply into the blue, was a naked ridge of lesser mountains, shattered into barren buttes and precipitous cliffs. Towards this point the White Quiver set his eyes and struggled. Occasionally a ribbon of verdant green marked the course of a stream and he waded through water which he must not drink though his parched tongue was swollen with thirst. He lost track of time and distance. Upon the whole horizon of his mind loomed but one thought,—to press on and on and ever on, over heavy miles until he should free himself of the buffalo skull. Sometimes his senses swooned, the world became black and his strained limbs ceased their mechanical motion, but always the thought of the Dawn Mist scourged him as a lash and he staggered forward. Still

the torrid sun beat down with flaming brand and the reflected heat quivered visibly over the dry, alkali waste.

Towards evening a flood of crimson incarnadined the lean, yellow plain and the long shadows became a deeper blue. By this radiant light the mountains seemed suddenly very near. Three sharp buttes towered, clear cut and defiant before him. The highest of these was his goal. Straight ahead, between him and the mountains, was a small wood of scrub pines and he entered their thin, sun-dappled shadow gratefully. He went on a little faster, gaining heart and strength with the reviving freshness of the shade. The ground here was rough with protruding roots and he stumbled, falling heavily. He lay prone for a while, faint with pain, then rose with extreme effort. The sun had sunk and a draught of caressingly cool air breathed on the earth. The tender rose-shot gray of the moth hour subdued the garish glare of day. A little farther ahead a wind-fall crossed

his path. He stood before it, helpless. He could not turn to either side for the trees grew too thick and he was traveling the only open way,—an old game trail. The wind-fall was only a small, uprooted pine but had it been a gigantic barrier it could not have seemed more insurmountable to him. Was he to stop there in his tracks baffled like a brute by the mischievous trick of a dead tree? Dull, stubborn rage kindled in him. He would not yield. He bent far over, summoning his last reserve of strength; he ground his teeth into his bleeding lips and gave one tremendous bound. There was a hideous tear and break; a cataclysm of pain that sent the stars of heaven showering about his head. He rolled over and over in agony. In that final effort he had rent the fleshly strips that bound him. He was free.

When he opened his eyes it was dark. Only thin, little moonbeams trickling through the trees picked out occasional objects and threw them into high relief.

The still air was full of mystical night sounds. He lay carefully on his left side, recalling that for two sleeps he must rest on his left side and for two he must rest on his right side. He was foredone and had scarcely strength to fill and smoke the sacred pipe, to sing his songs and make his prayer before he sank into unconsciousness again, to wait for the coming of Nits-o'-kan, his Dream for Power.

He slept long and heavily and when he awoke pale streamers of sun were flowing among the shadows of the pines. Birds twittered busily overhead, peeking down at him with round, inquisitive eyes. Squirrels chattered noisily as they flashed from limb to limb. Everywhere there was the prevailing spirit of liveliness and activity which greets each sunrise. The White Quiver felt the spell as did the birds and the squirrels and each living thing. He struggled to his feet. No Dream Helper had come to him in the night. A weight as of stone oppressed him; his wounds were living pains, burn-

ing as white-hot brands; his muscles were sore but flooding his brain as the sunlight flooded the universe was the thought of the Dawn Mist and the object on which he was bent.

He filled his lungs with the pure fragrant air of the new day and it was as food and drink to him. He advanced a few steps, then stopped and listened. His nostrils widened, his dry lips moved. What was that pleasant noise issuing from the silence? Was it merely a mocking little wind, jesting idly with the trees or was it,—*Water!* The liquid, rushing sound came from the direction of a clump of cottonwoods and willows and he staggered towards it blindly. Presently among the lacy-leafed, red-stemmed, pungent-smelling willow bushes he saw the cold, silver glint of flowing water. He leaped into it, he flung out his arms in it, bathed his face, his head, his long matted, bloody hair in it, and gave his whole, exhausted body to the cold, stimulating water. Yet despite the lust of

thirst that tempted and tortured him to the point of frenzy, no drop defiled his lips and violated his fast.

As he emerged from the little wood into the open, and great, painted spaces unrolled before him, he saw among the distant, purple line of peaks, streamers of mist drifting, changing, melting into sun-heated air. They were as she had been, —as beautiful, as evanescent and as little of earth. Inspired by the thought of her he struggled on, harried by the merciless task-master, self-sacrifice. Straight before him was the rising sweep of a barren, rocky country, culminating in the three sharp buttes that had been as guide posts. No more bleak or desolate landscape could be imagined. Above him swam the blue sky, beneath his feet spread chaotic wastes and standing before him as though to bar the way were the three challenging buttes. He might have been the First Man, alone in an unpeopled sphere. Huge boulders lay in his path and he toiled painfully over slides of

sandstone. Sheer-cut cliffs dropped dizzily, revealing smooth, brilliantly-colored rock walls and gorge-depths filled with violet haze. Two mountain goats stepped with nice precision around a little ledge overhanging a precipice. A bighorn sheep, perched on a soaring pinnacle, reared his splendid crest against the sky and an eagle, poised on motionless wings, drifted in the gold-steeped blue. The grandeur of the vast stillness was more eloquent than any sound. The music of the gods is silence absolute. As he proceeded there fell upon the agonized body and soul of the toiling man, something of the peace of the mountains. Compared with these magnificent spaces, these heaven-confronting heights, he felt humbled into insignificance. Even his wounds seemed slight and superficial when he saw the vitals of the mountainside torn asunder and laid bare.

The White Quiver was straining to reach the tallest of the three buttes. He stopped often to breathe and gain power.

His moccasins were cut to pieces by the sharp rocks and his feet were torn and bleeding.

Mid-day caught him as in a trap between the hot, molten blue and the scorching pavement of stone. There was no shelter save the thin, purple shadows of boulders and crags. A terrible thirst seared him. His dry tongue crackled between his parched lips. The torrid sun beat down until he grew giddy and a little mad. He fancied he saw evil, mocking spirits in the trailing shadows, and tipis of ghost-enemies in the scattered white clouds that floated lazily across the burnished blue.

The long day wore on and at last as the sun hung over the mystical purple of the Great Range, the White Quiver stood on the ultimate summit of the mountain. The earth fell away beneath him. He seemed to be soaring and his spirit was filled with wonderful exaltation. On that pinnacle of stone his soul was alone with the Infinite.

He looked long at the sinking Lord of the Universe, held his arms high over his head and cried:

"Great Mystery! Maker of Dreams!

"Look down on me from your blue lodge which is the sky!

"You see my heart is strong and pure.

"I have borne the torture and kept my fast.

"Send me a Dream of Power and a Dream Helper.

"Give me the wisdom of the patriarchs, the strength of fifty warriors that I may find the Dawn Mist.

"Oh! Sun! fill my spirit with your light and show me your will."

The White Quiver stood motionless, straining his arms out towards the sun that dropped beneath the horizon into the dark curtains of his shadowy lodge,—the night. His voice pealed out loudly and it came rippling back in lessening undulations until it died in silence.

The moth hour came.

The Evening Star struggled to free

itself from the thrall of light, and gleamed at first faintly and uncertainly in the pale green sky. Then others flashed bright torches from the gathering dusk until the whole black dome of heaven glittered and thrilled. The Wolf Trail spanned the infinite darkness with pearly light. The constellation of the Lost Children clung timidly together in their heavenly refuge; the Seven Brothers and the Lodge of the Spider Man shone bright and clear, and through the Fixed Star of the North, which is the opening into the Sun-God's kingdom, beamed the celestial rays of Paradise.

Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, the wan, white moon, in her unending flight, stood tiptoe on the horizon, then soared into the nightly skies.

The stars spelled midnight. . . . The Moon completed the vast semi-circle of the sky and set over the frosty peaks. The darkness grew thicker. Then the Herald of the Dawn, Epi-so-ax, the Morning Star and his half-human Child,

the New Robe or the False Morning Star rose in conjunction, great, luminous spheres of dazzling light.

Still the White Quiver kept his vigil.

He kindled a fire from the living coal which he carried in his fire-horn and on it he burned sweet-grass, balsam-pine and fragrant herbs in the hope that the incense might bring a Dream Helper to him.

In the cold, burnt-out gray of dawn he lay down to dream for Power and while he slept he had a vivid vision.

He saw, stretching below him, a fair country, green with grass and watered with many pleasant streams. The dawn light, mellow, golden-white tinged the valleys, touched the hilltops and lingered lovingly on the mists that drifted like spirits over the earth. One of these pale, luminous mist-shapes drifted towards him, drifted and drifted until it hung poised above him, then he saw it change form and assume a human likeness and lo! it was the Dawn Mist herself!

At the same time out of the emptiness sounded a voice of thunder saying:

"If you would have the Dawn Mist, overcome the Medicine of Ky-O, the Grizzly Bear!"

He sprang up startled and awake. The Dream was gone but those strange words rang in his ears. He listened for further admonition but none came. Silence dropped like a dead weight on the sleeping earth. The Dream had come and was gone. But what did it signify? What meant that inexplicable message of the Voice:

"If you would have the Dawn Mist, overcome the Medicine of Ky-O, the Grizzly Bear!"

Ky-O! the Grizzly Bear! Did it mean that savage breed of the mountains, or, O! riddle of riddles, did it mean the hag who had always stood between him and the fulfillment of his desire?

He watched and waited on the mountain top praying, burning sweet-grass and singing his sacred songs. He smoked to

urge his Dream Helper to return and he rigidly kept his fast. In the night hush, the weird, deep measure of his song sounded with the gray wolves' thousand-tongued plaint to the moon. Four suns rose and set and his Dream for power remained unanswered.

CHAPTER X

ON the evening of the seventh day the White Quiver returned. His features had become sharper and the expression of his face set and hardened. He told nothing of what had befallen him and no one dared violate his silence with a question, yet all could see how terrible must have been the purification which he had undergone; how pitiless and stern had been his self-chastisement.

He came back noiselessly and mysteriously as a shadow that slips out of the palm of night, and walked among the tipis, looking neither to the right nor to the left. His tribesfolk watched him with reverence, but, in respect for him, they showed no outward sign. They noted, through the cool grayness of dusk, the depth and rupture of his wounds and

how in even seven sunsets, his ribs showed in bronze bars through the flesh. He walked around the circle of the camp and passed by the lodge of the Owl Brave, who stood in the open in company with his men. The White Quiver had become acutely sensitive to influences from without and he felt the enmity of their stare and fancied he heard a suppressed laugh as he took his way slowly towards his tipi. He had not gone many paces when suddenly there appeared in his path the bent form of Ky-O, the witch woman, and inevitable as fate, the lean, wolf-dog followed at her heels. The White Quiver stopped. His whole being thrilled with rage and red murder flamed in his eyes. Here she was,—the hag, who, by some unknown spell, had come between him and the desire of his soul. At no time, upon no occasion when all seemed fair for him, had her black shadow failed to fall across his path. All of these torturing thoughts swept over him in a scorching flood, as a forest fire sweeps the wood, and ringing

in his ears was the Voice that sounded in his Dream, crying:

"If you would have the Dawn Mist, overcome the Medicine of Ky-O, the grizzly bear!"

Involuntarily he gripped the knife at his side, but the old woman seemed so slight a thing after all, so pitifully unworthy of a warrior's steel. Then, too, he knew nothing to justify such a deed of violence. The words of his father came to him:

"He who is master of himself, who yields neither to rage, nor lust nor hatred nor love, may some day be fit to be a chief among men."

The cold wisdom of these tenets was not for his stormy soul where love was supreme ruler, but he could curb his rage, his hatred, and he passed on and disappeared from sight. He fancied she would have detained him and spoken with him, but the suppressed fury of his mien silenced her and she spoke no word.

Next day he and Wolf Medicine re-

mained together from the hour the sun hung in mid-heaven to its setting behind the spiked purple barrier of the peaks, but what the ancient wise man heard from the young brave's lips, no one ever knew, for, as the solitudes of earth, where the Great Mystery works its Supreme will, are grandly silent, so the soul of man, pregnant with heroic deeds, speaks not, but waits until the appointed time, then acts.

As the evening star shone luminously in the deepening violet of the sky, the White Quiver went about among his young men and made known to them that he was going on the war-path. Those of them who had no fear in their hearts might go with him, but any man whose life was dearer than glory must remain behind. Eight of his band swore that they would serve him to the death.

Eagle Plume sanctioned the expedition. He would remain with the tribe until the scouts, who were forever scouring the country, should report some trace of the

enemy and there was some clue to follow, in which event, he would start in pursuit immediately. Meantime he trusted everything to the White Quiver for he knew the might of purpose that had caused him to endure the torture and to fast for four suns in the solitude.

The Tall Pine prepared a feast of marrow bones for the White Quiver and his departing braves. She had shorn her long, black hair, inflicted deep wounds upon her flesh and painted half of her face black in token of mourning, but now her breast leapt at the thought of the red glory of the war-path and she longed to be off with the young men and to battle side by side with them as she had in the days of her youth with Eagle Plume, her lord.

The braves ate of the boss marrow bones solemnly and in religious quiet. Everyone knew that the White Quiver and his war party were issuing upon a desperate quest and that this might be the last time they should meet together this

side of the Great White Desert of the Dead.

At intervals during the feast, the tom-toms beat, then ceased, and between the lodge curtains from without, glowed the light of a kindling fire. At each throb of the drum the White Quiver threw back his head a little and listened. That marshal call came again and again with growing rapidity and greater spirit. It ran like an alarm through the night silence and sent men's blood tingling in their veins from quickened hearts. To each of them it brought memories of desperate conflict, of ravishing excitement, of hard-won glory on bloody fields and with these memories was the thought of this present expedition, with all its uncertainty and risk. Rising on the flood of the tom-tom's heart-stirring pulse, sounded a chant droned with bee-like monotony at first, then breaking into sudden spurts of treble glee that sent a shock of enthusiasm through the nerves of the listeners.

If they who sat in the circle around him

thrilled to that inspiring call to arms, if the very children danced with mad, savage joy, the spirit of the White Quiver was stirred into a tempest. A brilliant light shone in his eyes. His breath came in short, explosive gasps that distended his fine nostrils and set his chest heaving like storm-tossed waters. He had come there and taken his place in the dead, starless calm of despair and then the black storm-clouds had gathered and a mighty tide of passion had driven them thicker and faster, until the violet gleam of lightning flashed and the roll of thunder sounded in his soul. He strove to stem the strength of it but at every fresh beat of the tom-tom and every treble dart, the lightning flashed more brightly and the thunder shook his entire being. Out of that confusion and tumult, a wild barbaric song sounded, until the words obsessed him. This should be his war-song, the song that he would sing over the fallen bodies of his enemies. His face became cruel. He exulted in the thought

of the torture he would inflict. One long, continuous swell of sound shook the quiet and wrested the jealous echoes from the hills. The White Quiver sprang up. Stripping himself of robes and ceremonial shirt, he leaped with one mighty bound into the open, as a wild beast freed from a cage plunges into his native fastnesses. With quick, light, rhythmical step, shaking his rattle and tossing his head high, he began the terrible measure of the war-dance. At first he was silent, then occasionally the war-cry broke from his lips. His young men joined him and he began the pantomime of an encounter with an enemy. Words came to him and he sang of the great deeds of his ancestors, of his father, Clear Water and of his own meeting with the Wind-God on Chief Mountain and the recovery of the Pinto horse. And all the while he danced he was swayed like a reed by the terrible storm that tossed him to his soul's depths. Silence fell again, still he danced. His young men counted *coups,* then ceased,

yet the White Quiver never hesitated nor paused. The firelight ran red as blood over his half-naked body, which glistened with sweat until it shone like bronze. The gashes over his shoulders bled afresh but he seemed unconscious of pain. The night was growing old when, suddenly there burst from him, in tones as deep-chested as the bellow of a bull, the burden of his war-song:

"For your sake, O! Daughter of my Chief,
"I seek the red war-path,
"I seek the red war-path,
"Ye! Ho! Ye! Ho-O-O-O,
"For your sake, O! White Mist of the Dawn!"

The awful, brazen melody, which was at once a song and a war-cry, died, and as the last echo of it was hushed in the remotest sanctuary of the hills, a change came over the earth and sky. The darkness trembled, the stars shivered, a fresh-smelling wind sprang up bearing odors of awakening woods, and a cold, faint

light pulsed across the heavens. The fire burned low and its gilt splendor waned in the increasing dawn. Out of the valleys and the shady, damp places of the mountains, troops of mist-shapes floated like hurrying ghosts seeking shelter from the light of day.

The White Quiver ceased his dance and stood still as a figure of stone, watching the white phantoms drift higher and higher, then melt into air, and there came to him so vividly that it seemed not the dream of a dream but reality, the picture of her as he had last seen her, standing alone, wrapped in snowy robes, vanishing in the blue distance as those mist-shapes were even then dissolving before his eyes; as he had beheld her in his Dream for Power in the Wilderness.

Was there some fatal symbol in this?

"For your sake, O! White Mist of the Dawn!" he whispered, but even as he watched, the sun shot gold arrows of light into the ghostly legions and they trembled and were gone. The mountain tops

flushed rose, kindled and blazed as with a mighty conflagration. At that signal a chorusing of birds began, the shadows shrank into the nether world of darkness and it was day.

The White Quiver armed himself with spear, bow, arrow, war-club and knife. He carried his shield of buffalo hide, and across his shoulders swung the pure-white quiver which was his emblem in peace and in war. The ponies were saddled, the braves leaped into place and they were off, speeding towards the unknown.

Out of the clear distance, where a plume of dust curled, came the snatch of a resonant, deep song.

"For your sake, O! Daughter of my Chief!"

Then even that faint note was heard no more.

CHAPTER XI

THE White Quiver had told no one, not even his eight braves, whither he was going. From earliest childhood he had listened to the stories related by old warriors of expeditions that traveled toward the sunset until the Great Salt Water barred the way, or southward to the land of the pueblos, and farther yet where seas of yellow sand quivered beneath skies of burning blue. He had plied them with questions, drunk in each description of landmarks and resolved some day to be as his fathers had been before him, a brave among braves, a seeker after strange, new experiences and above all else a great horseman and greater warrior.

His childhood play had been such expeditions in miniature. On his pony he had ventured beyond his fellows into dark

woods, out across the unexplored prairie or even to the edge of the mountains,—the land of awe.

So, now that he was heading his own war-party and striking out for a country he had never seen, he recalled with exceeding clearness the stories of the old men, and as he proceeded, scanning every tree and rock, he verified those tales of old. Here was the arrow-shaped rock where the Piegans did battle with the Crows. Farther on were the five tall pines by the waterfall which marked a victory over the Kootenais, and so it was through miles and miles of country he had never trodden before.

These landmarks not only guided him unerringly, but each was to him the subject of a story treasured in his memory and conjured up at will to lighten the long hours of the march. Yet he never forgot for so much as a moment, the master purpose of his quest. No sign, however small, escaped his lynx-eyes. He noted the least disturbance of the trail and dis-

mounted again and again to follow some possible track of the enemy.

They traveled a long distance over the prairie, often leaving the direct course towards the sunset which seemed to be their goal, to investigate a place which might hide a party of Kootenais. And after riding in the white moonlight through all of one long night, the morning revealed tall, slow-moving curls of smoke. They had come upon a camp. They were now near some pleasantly-wooded foothills where groves of lodge pole pine furnished shelter. The White Quiver raised his hand and the little cavalcade halted. He ordered his braves to dismount and they proceeded afoot to the edge of a cliff overlooking the camp. There were but five lodges. The people were just stirring and he saw at once that they were Kootenais. An old woman was stooping over the camp-fire preparing the morning meal. A few men moved hither and thither. One of the number, clad only in a fur robe, was just returning from

"HE ORDERED HIS BRAVES TO DISMOUNT AND THEY PROCEEDED AFOOT TO THE EDGE OF A CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE CAMP."

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his morning plunge in a neighboring stream. They were a goodly looking group of young fellows. Their ponies were picketed near by, cropping the sparse, dry buffalo grass. The White Quiver lay very still and waited. He was anxious to find out the number of fighting men in the party, then if possible to descend upon them, take what scalps he might and capture the horses. Whether this could be done or not, he was determined to know who was in each tipi, for the Dawn Mist might be held prisoner by this very party of Kootenais. He had looked critically at the ponies but he saw none that resembled the lost Pinto horse.

There was no sign of camp-breaking so the White Quiver decided to watch through the day and make no attack. Time passed very slowly. He saw the young men lying in the sun gambling, a few children and dogs playing, and women busied in many ways. Nothing happened and the inactivity maddened

him. He wanted to yell to them, to shout defiance into their startled ears and see them scamper like hunted rabbits, but he was used to waiting and he held his peace. He remained until night came, until the evening revelry was over and the red coals of the camp-fire died, then in the darkness and the silence he crept down to the camp. A dog barked and a chorus took up the infernal noise. He hid himself and lay low. A head was thrust out of one of the lodges and subdued voices spoke together, then the head was withdrawn and silence fell once more. The White Quiver slipped out into the open and made his way to the first lodge. By the dull, red light of the embers still glowing in the center of the tipi, he could distinguish the prostrate forms of men and women but they were the same forms he had seen and identified by daylight. From one to the other he passed until he came to the last lodge. Each had mocked him with disappointment. Into this final dwelling of hope he peered eagerly, anx-

iously. The last spark of fire had gone out and he could see nothing. He lay perfectly still and waited for the first tender light of the young day, knowing that at any moment he might be discovered and discovery there meant probable death. When little streaks of light, running quicksilver-like through the dark, had unified into one luminous thrill of day, he looked around the circle of the last lodge. As his eyes pierced each couch and he saw that she was not there, a savage, brute rage possessed him. He started back less cautiously than he had come, making a dash to cut the picketed horses loose, then for the pine-grown hill where he had lain from sunrise to sunset. Once more the accursed curs, in hideous, discordant yelps and barks, proclaimed the presence of an enemy and the startled camp espied him just as he entered the forest. As he plunged on, crashing and tearing through the bushes, he heard shouts of alarm and the clamor of preparation for pursuit. His own people were not far distant and

he made towards them at full speed, calling aloud that the enemy was in arms and they must make ready to defend themselves.

When he reached them they were already mounted and his horse stood waiting for him. At the same time he heard the hoof-beats of the on-coming foe and he knew that they were at hand. He spoke rapidly to his young men. He had watched the camp and entered every lodge so he knew the Kootenais' strength to a man. He divided his small force into three bands. One, composed of four men, should advance to the right, three of his number should advance to the left, while he, with Three Moons, a brave who was next in rank to himself, went straight ahead. Noiselessly as snakes they crept, crouching low in the underbrush, until the two parties going to the right and left were lost to sight and hearing. The White Quiver and Three Moons crawled towards the open. They could hear voices and the clatter of hoofs as the

Kootenais skirted the wood searching for them. The White Quiver, who understood the language, having learned it in his youth from one of his father's wives, caught fragments of their speech and from this he gleaned that they were uncertain how to proceed. He distinguished but two voices and he knew the time to strike was come. Leaping in his saddle, followed by his one warrior, he dashed forward, yelling the war-cry in loud, heart-stilling tones. Simultaneously, the parties posted at either extreme rushed down like whirlwinds on the camp.

The two Kootenai scouts were taken unawares. An arrow from the White Quiver's bow felled the pony of one, who sprang to the ground and tried to escape. A second arrow pierced him between the shoulders, whereupon the White Quiver jumped from his horse and struck the fallen enemy in the open, though by this time arrows were raining about him. The wounded man rose suddenly and lunged at the White Quiver with his war-

club, but he was weak from the shock of his wound, his hand was unsteady and his blow fell wildly on the air. The White Quiver stabbed him to the heart and took his scalp. Then he noted how Three Moons was beset by two Kootenais and at the same time a little battle was raging in the camp. He went to the rescue of Three Moons and took a second scalp, again striking the fallen foe. The other Kootenais escaped.

The White Quiver and Three Moons then whirled down into the camp where a fierce, hand-to-hand fight was raging. Their presence decided the issue and put the remaining enemies to flight. The Piegans captured the ponies which were poor and lean from hard riding and hurried away from the scene of bloodshed, leaving stark corpses behind them.

The White Quiver had executed his first deed of generalship as a leader, and yet he was gnawed by consuming disappointment. He had failed utterly to learn one word of her.

As he bent over the wounded Kootenais or pursued them to the death, he had said:

"Tell me which of your tribe captured the Dawn Mist, Chief Eagle Plume's daughter, and where she is hidden and I will spare you!"

One protested ignorance, another was stubbornly silent and a third mocked him, then in a white-hot passion he stopped their breath with death, slaying right and left like a blood-drunk demon to avenge her wrongs.

He had hunted and killed beasts before but never men; he had known the lust of the hunter as he stalks, then brings to earth, his prey, and now he felt a more savage and awful exultation as he saw the human quarry fall beneath his deadly aim. He had no remorse, no lingering sense of mercy. Something new and terrible came to life in him out of that red harvest of death.

But as he rode away with his eight braves, one of whom was slightly wounded, the savage joy he had felt in

the heat of battle died, and he was chilled and seared. Why, he could not tell. Moreover, his men were silent and downcast and had the mien of vanquished, rather than victorious warriors.

The bony, spavined horses clattered on with them and seemed a burden, not a prize.

They headed straight for the darkly-purple mountains that glittered with silver and buried their sharp crests in the white bosoms of caressing clouds.

The young men allowed their leader to ride ahead, gloomily occupied with his own thoughts, while they spoke together in whispers.

"Whither is he taking us?" one asked.

"To the Kootenai country. He has gone mad."

"If he keeps to the prairie we are safe but the mountains are full of evil spirits," said a third.

"And if we escape the spirits we shall be meat for the Kootenais' arrows. Nine men in the enemy's country are nothing."

So they spoke together, breeding the spirit of discontent.

The mountains loomed lofty and awesomely beautiful. Bands of sunlight wound around their vast steeps and revealed ravine and glacier, darkling forests and an occasional far-flung waterfall. And above them hung spirit-shapes of cloud, folding white wings tenderly about their dreaming lords. Overhead and around the mighty circle of the world, the sky throbbed flawless blue and beneath their feet the green-gold sea of the prairie flowed in gentle swells and rolling billows.

Toward evening they were lifted up by the low hills that clamored, as children, about the parent-mountains' feet, and finding a pleasant stream, pasture for the ponies and shelter for themselves, the White Quiver gave the order to halt for the night.

They ate of their pemmican and jerked buffalo meat in silence while the chill of the mountains crept down from ice-

fields and the night world awakened with subtle whisperings.

Next morning they found that the captured horses had escaped. Some of the young men wished to start out and try to re-capture them, but the White Quiver would not listen to such a plan; undoubtedly the animals had turned back and made straight for the prairie, and nothing less than a clue that the Dawn Mist was behind them, could change his course.

The brows of the braves were dark. Wolf Tail, the young man who had received the wound in the fight, seemed more uneasy than his companions. He maintained a long, unbroken silence, declined food and appeared to be ill. At length he sought his leader and spoke with him alone, avoiding the keen challenge of his eyes.

"While I slept I dreamed a strong dream. It was a bad dream. We were in a bare country. There were many rocks and dead trees. There were dark

waters among the rocks and the trees. Ky-O, the great grizzly, came out of his lair in the rocks and devoured us. I saw my own body bleed and the bodies of all of us bleed. You know that is an evil dream. I will go no farther. I warn you if you go you will be slain or overtaken with bad luck."

The White Quiver answered:

"Go back and tell the people Wolf Tail was afraid. I want no squaw-hearted coward with me!"

Sullenly Wolf Tail made ready, but before he left he related his bad dream to every one of his fellows.

"I believe the Chief is heading straight for the Walled-in lakes where there are many lodges of Su-ye-tup-pi,—the Under-Water people—and the haunted forest, where unhappy spirits cry in the night wind," said Wolf Tail. "I have never trembled before an enemy. I took two scalps in our fight with the Kootenais and I was first to strike three different times, but I will listen to the

Dream and no madman shall lead me into the belly of Ky-O."

Then, mounting his buckskin pony, he turned back towards the warm, amber prairie that shone almost as bright as the sun's self in the flood of morning light. The gaze of all save the White Quiver followed him longingly as he wound in and out among little parks of pine and cottonwood to re-appear like a dark and ever lessening flaw in the sunny distance.

The remaining seven were heavy of heart. Slowly they obeyed the Chief's sharp command to move forward. He, too, was gloomy and silent. All of his old-time buoyancy was gone. He would neither wrestle nor race nor gamble nor tell stories by the camp-fire.

As they advanced they fell under a sinister spell which all felt, yet none could comprehend. At intervals the White Quiver shouted his war-song:

"For your sake, O! daughter of my Chief!
Ye! Ho! Ye! Ho! O-o-o!"

but it was more like an angry challenge than a song.

They were traveling a wildly beautiful country, undisturbed by mortal tread and subtle with suggestions of mystery. New legions of nobly carven peaks flashed their silver signals out of the blue and presently the heaven-colored waters of a vast lake gleamed and darkened among steep, rugged shores. The mountains crowded each other about the trailing garment of the lake as though each would jealously claim her for his own, while over their shimmering ice-helms, soft gray clouds with tinsel fringes hovered low. From this mastering sublimity the seven braves freed themselves to recall Wolf Tail's dream. Had he not spoken of the dark waters of a great Walled-in lake and a spirit-haunted forest on its shores? They had all heard of that spirit-land since childhood and were afraid.

The day's march came to an end at the shore. The White Quiver left them

to seek an isolated spot where he might commune in solitude with the magnificent spectacle. The magic of the spot was upon him. He stood on a pinnacle of rock, and from this pedestal he overlooked the long, slender, serpentining lake that wound in and out among naked, abysmal cliffs and wooded shores, swung gently around little rocky islands swimming in its blue, and hid illusively behind the towering horde of mountains. Motionless and ecstatic, he watched the flaming sun drop low, its ruddy beams transmuting the blue waters into pools of light, illuminating the mountains until they flashed, jewel-bright and igniting the cloud-banners that burned like living flames. He gazed in awe at the splendor of the scene. Then a dim purple shadow dropped from the sky. The fire brands cooled and mellowed into pale yellow and rose and the great, luminous evening star trembled and shone in the west. And all the while the lake was changing. A mystical shade of vio-

let stole over the waters and the shores, relieved by cold, blue lights and splashes of colorless silver. An interval of darkness came, then the moon rose, flooding the heavens, the waters, the mountains and the woods with pearly radiance. A more ephemeral day dawned, replete with subtle beauty, and pale mists, like liberated ghosts, drifted out of their hiding-places and revelled with the night.

Again the White Quiver almost persuaded himself that out of these fleeting vapors the likeness of the Dawn Mist shaped itself, beckoning to him across the infinite, gazing down on him with eyes that were stars. He cried aloud with yearning, and was startled into consciousness by the echoing chorus that flung back his own voice from a hundred vocal heights.

The young men seated around the camp fire heard the cry and were alarmed. For them the night was full of dread. Whither was the untried chief leading them? Was he utterly mad? They

would keep faith and fight under him to the death as they had sworn, if the chance were fair and the enemy a human foe, but this was self-destruction and contrary to the divine revelation of dreams. And that weirdly penetrating cry? Was it from the throat of man or beast or night-bird, from the Su-ye-tup-pi of the lakes or the ghosts of the haunted forest? They argued and justified themselves almost to the point of mutiny, and that night another one of their number had an evil dream and turned back with the break of day.

The White Quiver felt the growing unrest of his braves and he knew that the crisis would come soon. A sinister influence possessed them. Their course lay along the rugged, winding shores of the lake, toward its head which was pillowed on the lap of the mountains.

The morning wind had billowed up flocks of white-breasted clouds that flew bird-like across the sky and as if in sport at intervals hid the gold eye of the sun.

And he, stretching out long, space-spanning shafts, rode down and trod the water with golden footsteps, drawing up to him ghostly vapors in passionate play. The light was ever changing, ever shifting. When the clouds prevailed, a gray shadow chilled the lake, dulled the sparkling silver snow of the peaks with lifeless pallor and robed the woods with purple; but when the sunlight, released, poured out its glory, all the brilliant colors leapt to life; the lake was resplendent with deep azure, changing now and again to the reflected green of the pines, and the mountains disclosed fine-spun gossamer falls and streams and fairy beauties of ice and snow.

They came to a high, terraced wall of rock which barred the way. Shrubs and small trees grew on its crest and occasionally upon its steep sides. The young men seized upon this obstacle and agreed that it could not be crossed with ponies, but the White Quiver reconnoitered this barrier and bade them follow him. They

went afoot, the White Quiver leading, next came the jaded horses and finally the braves, all toiling slowly to the summit. It was a precipitous and treacherous climb and one mis-step would have plunged men and beasts into the haunted waters below where the Under-Water-people lay waiting for human prey. The ascent won, they pressed on, gaining a broader view of the lake until the mighty, glacier-laden tusk of Na-to-si-o-to-pa, Going-to-the-Sun, burst upon them.

The White Quiver knew that the test of his braves had come, for at the base of that kingly mountain, along the shores of the lake, was the forest of blasted pines haunted by unhappy souls and held in superstitious dread by the Piegans. He, himself, would have rested uneasily there only a moon or two ago, but now in his desperate errand he was divorced from fear of man or evil spirit. He had hoped to time the day's march so it would take them beyond this place of awe, but despite the hounding desire that urged

him on, despite his merciless demands on beasts and men, fate had brought him here to these specter-trees at the moth-hour, the ghost-time and here they must camp.

The blasted pines crawled along the ground in bleached and matted masses that resembled old bones and strewn among them were heaps of stark and naked boulders wrested from their places and hurled down in the icy clutch of glacier or cataclysm. But here, also, was fresh water in plenty and feed for the ponies that were stumbling with fatigue.

"Here is water and grass. Here we will camp!" the White Quiver commanded.

He felt the clash of opposing wills challenge him. There was a moment of uncertainty, each waiting to see what the other would do, then no one having the courage to take the initiative, the young men dismounted from their ponies and obeyed.

A quarrelsome, gusty wind scolded

among the pines and set the waters of the lake into commotion. Dark masses of clouds loomed ominously in the sky and the evening grew cold. After dark the wind veered to the north, steadied and blew in a strong, sweeping tide, that sounded like the roar of an angry surf. Then the ghost trees found tongue. They mourned and wailed in low, sobbing anguish, or piped in a weird, shrill treble, screeching defiantly to the sightless night. And now and again, the fitful firelight fell across them and showed them writhing in torment on the ground. The rain beat down and harried the bright beacon of the fire, the wind-tide boomed ominously and the terrified watchers worked and struggled to keep the feeble blaze alive. No one thought of sleep. With that infernal ghost-moan shrilling and echoing in their ears, they clung to each other and to the fire as drowning men to a raft.

When, finally, the gray light of day came and the wind abated, the braves ap-

proached the White Quiver. Three Moons addressed him:

"Kyi! Chief, we have followed you," he said. "We have obeyed you. We came with you to go on the war-path. We are not afraid to fight. You know that. But you are taking us into the Unknown. This land is haunted,—it is not of earth. In the lake are Under-Water persons. You know a woman was stolen here by the beavers long ago. On the shore are the ghost trees and Ky-O, the grizzly bear. Ahead are the Kootenais. We will go no farther. Turn back with us, Chief. This is madness."

The White Quiver answered:

"Go! All of you! You are shaped like men but in your breasts are the hearts of women. You are traitors. You are cowards. I do not need you. Tell Eagle Plume I shall go on."

So they left him and he, unbaffled, set his face toward the sunset, his heart on the Dawn Mist and pressed ahead,—alone.

CHAPTER XII

THE White Quiver felt singularly light-hearted and free and his spirits rose like birds loosed from a snare, now that the soul-imprisoning influence of his renegade braves was gone and he found himself alone in this land of sublime mystery. It was early in the morning when the last echo of departing hoof-beats was hushed in perfect quiet. A golden silence lay upon the world. The clouds had rolled away and the wind that had lashed them, died in the dawn-calm.

Immediately before him, barring the farther vistas with its mighty bulk, Going-to-the-Sun, with earth-abandoning uplift, tossed its horned front into the blue. Like the tidal wave of a vast, primordial sea arrested in its upheaval, it stood, its waters changed to stone, its

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white foam congealed into ice. Its rugged sides, scarred and riven by ice-floe and deluge, still held fields of perpetual snow, and near its crest sparkled a glacier, like the profile of a human face. Upon the great tusk that marked its final altitude were carven shapes, heroic eagles, strangely impressive figures that had perched and watched and waited through the æons, unruffled by the bellowing tempest, oblivious to the intimate shock of lightning-brand and thunder-bolt.

The White Quiver looked at them in awe. Were they a brood of that dread bird of the skies, the flashing of whose eyes was the lightning, and the rushing of whose mighty wings set the thunder pealing? As he gazed in worshipful admiration, watching the light and shade move in ever-changing pictures over the mountain and the motionless stone eagles perched on its highest ascents, it seemed to beckon to him and say:

"Come with me above the earth for I am Going-to-the-Sun!"

The idea was the more fascinating because, as he measured the sharp-cut angles with his eye and noted the sheer cliffs near the summit, it appeared that no mortal could find foothold there. And the White Quiver knew that if he lived to return, some day he would answer the mountain's call. He believed that this was a spot favored by the Sun, for had he not seen the earliest rays leap straight to the peak and kiss its cold brow until it flushed as with life? Perhaps if one were strong hearted enough to dare the ascent, upon those hallowed altitudes, on that earthly temple of the Great Mystery, He, the Sun, would vouchsafe some revelation. If all else should fail, if he should return from the land of the enemy empty of heart and hand, he would then make the pilgrimage and answer the dumb challenge of Going-to-the-Sun.

He went on his way, the mountain seeming to move with him, presenting fresh aspects as he advanced. Now an enormous stone amphitheater opened before

him. In this lay a second glacier, larger than the first, from which seven fine-spun cascades, churned into lacy-meshed foam, dropped hundreds of feet into the lake.

As he issued from behind the barrier of the mountain a scene burst upon him such as few men ever see. A long, narrow stream of blue with an occasional silver glint,—blue more intense than the metallic flash of the dragonfly or the bluebird's wing or the azure arch of the midday sky;—on either side, tremendous mountains which rose out of the blue below and were lost in the blue above where white clouds hid the marriage of earth and heaven; and over all, subduing the green of forests on the mountain-sides, neutralizing the garish contrasts of rock and snow and verdure, a diaphanous, purple shade like the shadow of unseen wings. Following that channel in its windings among the abysmal gorge-rent cliffs it led to a shining pageant. The darkly somber mountains parted as open gates, and far, far away as the soul's ideal,

wrought in a dazzle of mellow light, shone a celestial spirit-land. From the cloud-pictured heaven streamed a halo of all-suffusing radiance, transfiguring the sky, the earth and the waters. And dominating the panorama, a slender, solitary peak, earth's finger, shining also like a spirit shape, pointed to the Sun.

The White Quiver rode as one who beheld a vision. It seemed to him as though the Great Spirit had dissolved the curtains of space and revealed the immortal dwelling of spotless souls. The thrall of sublimely awful beauty bore him above the dark reality of the pines along the trail, beyond the blue waters that shimmered away in sun-dipped distances, to where the lone peak pointed to the skies. The hallowed illumination penetrated at once the distance and the flesh, shining on his own soul, and for one fleeting moment he felt a closer kinship with the Great Mystery. Yet even in this climax of ecstasy, within his secret heart lingered the dumb, unknow-

ing fear that a young child feels in the dark. In that solitude absolute, he was conscious of a Presence which he could not see, nor hear, nor understand, but which was, nevertheless, as inevitable and all-pervading as the mystic, purple essence on the mountains and the lake.

In his state of exaltation he did not notice that his pony stumbled with fatigue, until the earth-reality came to him with the sobering presence of cool, sweet-smelling forests, breathing balsam odors of pine and flaming with splashes of hot, autumnal color. Then he noted with poignant remorse that the poor beast's breath came in deep, guttural gasps; bloody froth showed in his flaring nostrils, his tongue hung limp and his eyes rolled. The White Quiver dismounted, rested the belabored horse and watered him in a glacial stream, and when at last he continued on his way, it was afoot, his jaded and faithful mount following patiently at his heels.

The forest was a pleasant, calming

place. The pines and larch and occasional gilt clusters of cottonwood and tremulous asp, formed thick woods. The damp mold from which green-tongued ferns darted, silenced every obtrusive sound, so the low, sweet fluting of the evening wind, the wild lilt of birds, the resonant drumming of the woodpecker and the reedy call of insects seemed strangely loud and clear.

When the sun had sunk low in the heavens and only a delicate primrose light suffused the sky, the White Quiver emerged from the forest into a little open glade, surrounded by trees and overgrown with deep, lush grass. Immediately ahead, lifting its perfect cone against the sky was the slender peak, luminous as though created of gossamer stuff through which the sunset shone.

Here the White Quiver kindled his camp-fire. He turned his pony loose in the meadow to feed and to rest and he lay down beneath the sheltering trees.

At dawn he was up and after his liba-

tion in cold water, hurried on with the swiftness of one pursued. The way lay upward over rocky and difficult country and the White Quiver knew he was approaching the *"Backbone of the World."* He looked in all directions for a notch in the mountains, with a lake beneath which should mark the pass across the range. Once more he urged the pony onward, only to reach more forbidding altitudes where the slide-rock slipped and moved and rattled down terrible distances beneath the horse's molesting tread. At last the harsh, sobbing breath of the animal grew quicker and a deep groan rumbled from his very entrails. His eyes rolled, his body twitched and he fell headlong, dead.

The White Quiver mourned for him as a departed friend, silently praying for the peace of his faithful spirit, then he left the body on the rocky slide to ravaging coyotes and birds of prey. His last living companion was gone. There came to him for the first time an over-

whelming sense of isolation and complete detachment from the world. Even his friends, the trees, no longer whispered in the vocal wind. The stunted, misshapen, matted high-altitude growths were goblin shapes, weird, unearthly products of snow-drift and gale. The wind grew cold and sang shrill runes as it whirled amid the cairns and scattered untimely Winter in its wake. With magical call it summoned its legions, the clouds, who followed obedient, sheathing in their quivers white arrows of snow.

This was a world of god-trodden altitudes, with man left out of the reckoning and elemental forces imbued with personality holding unbridled sway;—that huge, heroic home of demi-gods of which his mother had told him in the long ago by camp-fires whose ashes had scattered twenty winters before.

Ahead of him, stretching out long, white fingers of ice among the dark setting of stone, lay a glacier of immense size. Castellated rocks of burnt rose

and green, the color of the sea, reared magnificent edifices. Farther on the formation changed again and showed the grind and polish of moving ice-bodies. He stooped to look at some pictured rocks which bore delicate, lacy patterns graven in blue and red on surfaces of sand color. Strange images of fishes, seaweed and deep-sea life were traced as by a master-artist's hand on the shapely polished stones, and vast heaps of them were scattered everywhere. Across glittering distances he saw the silver flood of a mighty waterfall and the subdued note of its tremendous music murmured in his ears. Close by him thin streams trickled downward, and near them grew curiously unfamiliar plants and flowers. Beyond was a gigantic moraine. The White Quiver climbed its steep ascent, often stumbling and nearly losing his foothold as the soft, spongy mass crumbled and gave way beneath his weight. When he gained the summit a vast and dazzling ice-world opened before him,

extending unmeasured miles. Up out of the frozen floe a dark sweep of mountains thrust their tips, like arrow-heads. The white surface of the glacier was crinkled and crumpled with frozen ripples, rent to its very heart by stupendous crevasses which showed brilliantly blue or green as they cut into the bosom of the ice. Clean-drilled, round holes sank to great depths and each was a fairy palace of crystalline beauty, made more ephemerally lovely by sparkling mists from little falls. Overhead the sky glowed a deeper blue, the surrounding rocks seemed darker and sterner in contrast with the white ice, and the sun's rays were reflected with intense, burnished brilliance by every crystal in that immeasurable accumulation of the æons.

It was an awe-inspiring spectacle.

While the White Quiver stood watching, a terrible roar sounded like thunder through the stillness and a huge mass of ice crashed down in a mighty ava-

lanche from a distant hanging wall of the glacier. The loud music of plunging waterfalls and the lesser gurgling lilt of draining streams was punctuated by the crack and boom of shifting ice. The White Quiver now got his bearings. He was on the rim of the storied ice-world of which the old men were wont to tell. He had wandered southerly out of his course. He looked across the vast, frozen flood with its stilled whirlpools and ripples, its deathly crevasses and treacherous, snow-masked surface, and decided to cross a corner of it, making direct for a high mountain whence he could command a view of the range and the country at its base. Accordingly, he descended from the moraine, gained the wet, stream-furrowed surface of the glacier and forged swiftly ahead. The footing was insecure and dangerous, for the ice had rotted in places under the summer sun and the reflected heat radiated by the solid rock around the edges. Again and again he found himself

almost surrounded and cut off by gaping declivities and he sank ankle-deep in snowy slush. The sun beat down very warm, the sky pulsed and deepened into royal blue, the ice flashed in jeweled splendor and rainbows bridled the tumbling waterfalls.

The White Quiver became dazzled and snow-blind until he scarcely saw.

Suddenly something gave away under him and he fell and struck and knew no more. . . .

When he opened his eyes it was upon the blue-lit depths of an ice chamber, where the walls showed azure like the noon sky which had just now glowed above him. He was numb with cold but he struggled to his feet. Looking upward he could see a streak of open day at no great distance over him. He began to chip out steps in the ice walls with the knife he carried at his side. It was slow, hard work but he knew if he could fashion such a crude stair extending upward to a shelf or ridge twice his height

above him, he could gain the surface before the death-chill stilled his efforts. He discarded his pack and put his whole strength to the task. The ice was hard, but his muscle-driven blows began to make an impression. The exercise, too, sent the sluggish, half-congealed blood spurting with new vigor through his veins. Slowly, painfully, he hewed his way to the shelf and he felt the warm promise of sun-lit air envelop him. It was more difficult to work on up to the surface from this point, for he had less footing than on the ice-floor at the bottom of the crevasse.

At length he emerged, half-frozen, exhausted and dazed. The falls and streams were making their weird music, the glacier lay calm and placid as death, but the sun had travelled far and mellowed towards his setting, and long, intensely blue shadows flung themselves over the pale ice. He forced himself on until darkness came and the young moon shone on the slumbering glacier, touch-

ing it with ghostly beauty. If, in the warm, vivid light of day it had looked like death, how like it did it seem now, blue-white, rigid and cold by the vapory suggestion of the moon. The dead of the æons it was and is, a shrouded scion of the ice-age haunting the heights that gave it birth.

The White Quiver set foot upon firm ground with a feeling of relief and he slept in a shelter of rocks until the sun quickened him to action.

He hurried over smooth rock-floors and vast flights of natural steps, like the stairways of Assyrian palaces; he threaded his way amongst giant boulders, passed onward and downward through pleasant woods scattered over eminences whence across a vapory sea of haze he could distinguish Going-to-the-Sun and its lesser mountain-brothers shining in the light of the new day. A silver stream wound its irregular way among green shores all dipped and dimmed and made one with the blue shade of heaven

by the haze that rose to meet the bending sky. And between those two flowing seas of azure, the one above, the other far below, rising out of the winding water were shining shapes of mist. They floated low, sailing slowly on vapory wings, through the calm air far below the hillside where the White Quiver stood watching. . . .

As he went down into the valley he sang loudly, insistently, the burden of his war-song:

"For your sake, O! Daughter of my Chief," and the mountains took up the lay and passed it on until a shrilling chorus flung it upward, towards the sky.

When the White Quiver reached the little, pine-grown basin he knew he had found himself. Before him lay a beautiful lake. Two peaks showing marvelous colors soared above it, and these mountains were connected by a notch which he knew was the pass.

The moist, sweet air of morning filled him with physical exhilaration. He

plunged into the icy waters of the lake, swimming far out into its glassy depths and shattering its perfect reflections with ripples born of his broad strokes. All about him water ouzels were dipping and flitting with a plaintive, sweet note, then fluttering their quiet-hued feathers that shone with sparkling drops. The morning sun lit one-half of the crescent-shaped mountain wall across the lake with gold and in that tide of light, strata of dull-red, streaks of tawny yellow, patches of mossy green and livid masses of old ice made a gay brocade of color. That mantle of the mountain side, wrought of ice and rock, lichen and light, was more marvelous than the handicraft of the most skilled weaver of blankets or painter of pottery. On the other side of the crescent lay a deep, dark shadow. Straight ahead was an ice field and over it a slender thread of water trickling from greater ice-masses above.

The chill of the morning was a tonic to the White Quiver. He breakfasted on

a grouse which he had shot, and bearing in mind the least descriptive word of the old story-tellers, he started tentatively along the left shore of the lake where he found evidence of an old trail. The uplift was sudden and steep. Objects below diminished rapidly. It was a tragically beautiful ascent up the very shoulders of mountains that seemed as far removed from the world of man as the cloud-land. And as the White Quiver climbed the narrow trail, his chest rising and falling in a tumult of deep breaths, his thews hardening like flint under the strain, and the earth falling away and lessening in his vision as it must beneath that of a soaring bird, a shadow fell and a hollow rumble reverberated through echoing wastes. He paused and looked around. Over the pinnacle of Going-to-the-Sun, the black and tattered forerunner of a cloud-host rode out into the blue. A saffron yellow glow, deepening into olive-green was upon the distant mountains whence he had come and at intervals that

lessened while he watched, evil thrusts of lightning darted earthward in zig-zag, blinding, bright streaks. After each lightning flash the thunder shook the mountains to their very base and the earth cowered and was afraid. Little birds darted hither and thither in a panic of twittering fright and a snow-white mountain goat on a cliff nearby took his nicely poised and precise way towards shelter. A sudden and furious gale swept over the mountains, shrilling evilly and driving the clouds onward in a mad rush. It was as though the whole brood of those heroic birds that perched on Going-to-the-Sun had spread their storm-stirring wings and taken flight. The White Quiver hurried on. There was no shelter or refuge on that steep and naked mountain side. Each lightning brand seemed to envelop him in a sheet of flame and objects hitherto unseen, darted out of the shadow and rushed upon him in those fleeting seconds of terrible illumination. He was nearing the

summit. The lake had become but a tiny, inconsequential bead of jade green; he had passed dead glaciers and snow fields and had nearly gained the bare, unprotected crest, when close to him came a simultaneous flash of blinding light and a report that sent giant rocks toppling with a hollow roar. Dazzled and half-dazed he leaped out of the path of a crashing boulder, bent on finding some refuge from the mighty storm that was master of wind and lightning and thunderbolt, beneath whose awful shock peaks that were married to the clouds seemed impotent and weak. He had gone but a few steps when he saw a black gap in the solid rock wall. It was the opening to a cavern. The aperture was so small that he was obliged to crouch down on his hands and knees to enter and knowing that this might be the den of some bear or other wild beast, he drew his knife and held it between his teeth. The sightless black of night prevailed within. He crawled forward

cautiously. Only the muffled echo of the storm reached him there. He paused and relaxed to rest and wait, when a sound smote his ear that caused his heart to leap. It was the regular, rhythmical note of a sleeper's breathing that deepened into the guttural of a snore. What was it? Who was it? Was it Ky-O, the grizzly bear, or might it be, perchance, some wanderer, who, like himself, had taken shelter from the infernal fury of the elements? He paused, hesitated, then, following the direction whence the sound came, crept silently as a serpent until he touched something soft and warm. It was not fur nor claws, but a blanketed human form. His fingers ran nimbly and lightly over the sleeper. He felt the moccasined feet, the texture of the buckskin shirt and leggings and he knew the man to be a Kootenai. The fascination of his curiosity was beyond control. His fingers fell lightly as a breath on the features of the slumbering man, who, with an oath,

sprang to his feet, demanding who was there.

"An enemy!—of the Piegan tribe," said the White Quiver answering the stranger in his own tongue. "And you?"

"A Kootenai," was the reply.

The White Quiver's blood burnt like fire through his flesh. He breathed hard and fast and his fingers closed tightly upon his knife. There in the pall of blackness, with the warring of the elements sounding in his ears, he was face to face with one of the tribe, possibly the man himself, who had captured the Dawn Mist. "Fall on him and slay him!" his brute nature bayed out of the past of a savage breed, but he knew if he slew this man here and now, the secret which possibly no lips save his could reveal, might be lost forever.

But the Kootenai had no such motive to stay his blood-lust.

"Come out into the open," he cried, "and we will fight like warriors."

They trusted each other for men of

honor, so they feared no foul play in the dark and accordingly they made their way, creeping on all fours after the manner of beasts, out into the livid light of day. They faced, each gazing with searching, blood-shot, squinting eyes into the very soul of the other. There was a curious similarity between the two. Each was travel-stained and haggard; each was armed with a knife, a war club, bow and arrows, and each was quite alone. They stood a few paces apart, the lightning intensifying the fury on their faces, reflecting its lurid darts in their anger-widened eyes, and the thunder all but deafening them with its roar. And in their hearts raged a storm as fierce as that which wreaked its terrible wrath around them.

The White Quiver's soul blazed in a conflagration that flashed with the lightning, crashed with the warring thunder and the lust of his vengeance drove all before it in a tempest like the unfettered wind. Yet even through his dominant

passion he felt the strangeness of the situation. He and his deadly foe were met here on the top of the great range, at the dividing point between the country of the sunrise and that of the sunset; they were both without followers, confronting each other amidst the anger of battling elements.

So they stood for a brief space, then simultaneously both lunged. A sudden blaze of light blinded the Kootenai and the White Quiver, striking a mighty blow, disarmed him and his knife fell clattering upon the rocks. The White Quiver was a younger and more agile man and before the Kootenai could recover himself, he had captured the knife and his enemy was at his mercy.

The Kootenai's defiant face showed no emotion. He clasped his hands behind him and said:

"Slay me. You have a finer kill then you think. I am Spotted Horse, Head Chief of the Kootenais."

The White Quiver was noble of spirit.

In spite of his deadly hatred for this man and every one of his tribe, he felt an instinctive admiration for his fine courage. Now that the foe was in his power and stood waiting for that vengeance he had longed with brute madness to inflict upon him, his hand was nerveless and his will was empty. Even as the storm was passing overhead, his soul-storm was passing likewise. Try as he would, he could not force himself to strike the proud, bared breast of the man before him. There was a tense silence which seemed very long. Suspension of purpose makes sport of time, so it seemed hours that they confronted each other, motionless as stone images, the White Quiver holding the knife clenched, ready to plunge into the Kootenai's heart. Yet something stayed his hand.

The spell broke. The White Quiver lowered his weapon.

"I cannot kill you," he said.

The Kootenai stretched out his hand,

but the White Quiver drew himself up haughtily and said:

"No. I cannot clasp your hand in friendship. There are wrongs which a warrior forgives but not such as you have done me."

"Your words are mystery. Speak straight."

"Your tribe has stolen the Dawn Mist, my love, the daughter of our Great Chief, Eagle Plume, and with her you have taken the white buffalo hide and the Pinto medicine pony that belonged to Clear Water, my father."

"Look into my heart. You will see that I do not lie.

"By the Great Mystery, by your gods and mine, I swear that the Dawn Mist, nor the white buffalo hide, nor the medicine Pony were taken by my people."

The White Quiver knew that Spotted Horse spoke the truth. Darkness as black as starless night fell on his soul; his chin sank on his breast, the knife dropped from his nerveless hand and

clattered at his feet. All had been in vain. He had been following merely a mist shape, such as those that haunted the mountains in the dawn. His hope was frozen like the glaciers and though his body lived, his heart was dead.

The Kootenai's voice roused him.

"We fought like two children, I, over an old quarrel of your people and mine which affects neither of us," he was saying, "you, at a fancied wrong of which I am not guilty. You have given me my life. My heart feels warm towards you and I am henceforth your brother. I see the grief of your spirit and I will help you to seek the Dawn Mist. I will fight by your side on the war-path and no one shall break our friendship."

The White Quiver laid his hand in that of Spotted Horse and they smoked together in token of everlasting amity.

Gradually the storm passed and the two men sat down together and spoke at length. The White Quiver told the whole story of the disappearance of the

Dawn Mist; of his oath to find her and of his desertion by his own braves.

Then Spotted Horse related the strange analogy of his start for the Piegan country with the same number of braves, who likewise abandoned him, one by one, until he found himself alone on the pass.

They reckoned by campfires that they had started about the same time. In but one respect did their parties differ and that was in purpose. Spotted Horse was after ponies, the White Quiver sought only the Dawn Mist. In this they saw more than a strange coincidence of events. It was a preordained plan of the Great Mystery and they had been as puppets in His hands.

The two chiefs decided that obeying the Power which had brought them together and joined their hearts in the bond of friendship, they should declare a truce between their tribes until the head men of each nation could meet together and hold a council. Spotted Horse promised

to bring his tribe to the land of the Piegans in the Moon of Flowers; and he and the White Quiver agreed that the rendezvous should be Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain. Spotted Horse swore by the Sun that in the meantime and forever, he would spare no effort to help the White Quiver find the Dawn Mist.

A great and sudden friendship sprang up between the two men. Spotted Horse had sympathy and admiration for the young Piegan who had dared to forge ahead to the gateway of his enemies' country to recover his lost love. He even offered to take the White Quiver to his land and conduct him through every lodge.

"But you will not find her there," he added sorrowfully. "If she were, I would deliver her into your hands."

He explained that there had been a small hunting party of Kootenais in the immediate neighborhood of the Piegan camp at the time of the great kill of buffalo and the abduction of the Dawn Mist,

but the Kootenais were weak in number, dared not attack the stronger ranks of the Piegans and returned with but a small reward of game and no other spoils.

The clouds drifted away below the peaks and the muffled roar of distant thunder became fainter and less frequent. The sun shone warm and bright through the diamond-clear atmosphere and illuminated strata-banded cliffs and mountains that bore new and brilliant colors after the rain. Purple cloud-shadows painted the vast lawn whose spears were stately pines. The warm, moist ground exhaled a wonderful fragrance, and the birds, emerging from shelter filled the air with a rapture of song.

Before parting, the two men stood on the summit of the divide, whence they could look towards the sunrise down on the shimmering lake, and farther, through hazy forests to bristling multitudes of peaks, dominated by the azure and ivory steeps of Going-to-the-Sun, and farther yet into the blue dimness of

greater distances. In the opposite direction, towards the sunset, the country of the Kootenais unfolded in beautiful but milder vistas. There also lay a lake of polished green upon whose shores white-flanked mountains crouched and over their ice-sheathed summits, range upon range ebbed away in lessening undulations until they seemed the merest ripples against the sky.

On the threshold of this mighty gateway each in view of his native land, they said farewell, holding in their hearts the promise of the spring,—the blossoming of the Moon of Flowers.

CHAPTER XIII

WINTER came suddenly with a rushing of winds and a blinding swirl of snow. The season of yellow leaves with its heavy gold-drenched haze had come and gone. With the first big storm, the Piegans, under Eagle Plume, had established their camp and prepared for the long period of cold. Old men predicted a severe winter. The bark on the trees was thick and the fur of the animals heavy. Bitter blizzards drove across the prairie, catching up the powder-fine snow and scattering it in deadly deep drifts until the whole face of the land was changed to a pallid desert. After the storm, the cold was intense. No wind blew, yet there was a vibrant, sibilant ringing as of myriads of infinitely tiny, invisible bells.

Not many suns had risen and set since

the Dawn Mist disappeared, yet a great change had come upon the world, for the seasons are quick of action in the north. She had gone with the rush of open waters, the flaming of gilt and rose-dipped leaves, the shimmer of amber sun and the southward flight of the wild geese; but now the arresting chill of winter stripped the woods of their beauty, stilled the silver-tuned streams and hushed the world to sleep.

Eagle Plume had made several short sallies as the scouts brought false hopes, and the Owl Brave had ridden off with a war party towards the sunrise, but no one found a trace of the Dawn Mist.

One by one the braves of the White Quiver had returned, and to shield their own dishonor, told tales of how he had gone mad and of his folly in pressing on to the Kootenai country after the warning of many dreams.

"He will never return," they declared. "The snow must be deep even now upon his body."

And surely their prediction seemed likely enough. Over the dark and angry peaks storm banners streamed, a wild carnival raged and the open clouds poured down their burden.

Still the Tall Pine refused to listen to their gloomy forebodings. The White Quiver would return. Not only would he return but he would bring the Dawn Mist with him. Her faith was boundless for she had Sun Power. The cold blue-white dawn found her straining her eyes towards the mountain-barred west and when the pale yellow sunset streaked the gray clouds with faint light she was still watching for her child.

The dark clouds drifted up on the four winds in great, dense masses, formed one solid bank, then the snow fell long and unceasingly.

With the great snow came the White Quiver; and the Winter's self was not more desolate nor bleak nor chill than he.

The Night Wind saw him first far

across the dead, colorless stretches, a solitary figure standing out sharply against a frozen world. And as he came, silent and ghost-like, his footsteps were erased and obliterated by the thin, icy winds that smoothed and leveled the shifting snow into characterless wastes.

The Night Wind shrieked:

"He comes! The White Quiver comes, but he comes *alone!*"

The Tall Pine rushed from her husband's lodge and followed the direction of the mad boy's pointing finger, and as she saw the lonely figure glooming out of the white distance, the bitterness of despair desolated her soul. Each dawn her brave heart had gone forth with this man on his quest. She had seen in vivid imagination how he wandered and searched and did battle, but always in the end she had pictured him leading her child back in triumph. Her grief and disappointment knew no bounds and while the Night Wind capered off to meet him, she gashed her flesh anew and blackened

her face that he might see her agony was unassuaged. In vain Eagle Plume tried to soothe her; in vain he urged her to be calm and listen. Her emotion rose as a torrent in the spring and she confronted the White Quiver, passion-tossed, bleeding and with tongue as deadly as poisoned arrows.

"Hai ye! So you are the hero who swore to find my daughter!" she cried.

The White Quiver looked at her with infinite pity and said never a word.

"No. You cannot answer. You have failed. Our men have turned women and now the women must turn men to fill their places. It is I who must find the Dawn Mist!"

Her grief broke into a wild, incoherent storm and Wolf Medicine with several women, took her away bent and shaken as a tree in the grip of the wind.

People gathered and listened to her reproaches and a loud cry of derision at the White Quiver was smothered. Even those who had lauded him a short moon

before, were ready to turn against him now.

Eagle Plume advanced and took his hands.

"No-ko-i,—my son!" he said, "do not heed her for she is mad with sorrow. Every sunrise she has looked for you and sunset has found her still watching, watching, watching as though her soul went out in her eyes to meet you. Poor woman! She needs our pity and our prayers. Come with me. I would speak with you alone."

The two men disappeared together in Eagle Plume's lodge and left the people without embarrassed and uncertain.

The braves who had deserted the White Quiver spread the poison of distrust among the tribe. Each one could point out wherein the young chief had erred; each one had a theory which, if carried out, would have brought success rather than failure. The Owl Brave had secretly encouraged these stories and they grew until some, who knew nothing of

the matter, made bold to assert that the White Quiver was a madman and a fool, —a fighter of phantoms, not men. Eagle Plume who was a man of judgment, had not heeded these tales nor had the Tall Pine until the young warrior came back alone.

When the Tall Pine had recovered from the first shock of disappointment she announced her intention to fast and build a Medicine Lodge. Once, long ago in her youth, the Great Mystery in the Sun had listened to her prayers and delivered Eagle Plume and herself out of the grip of death. Ever since they had obeyed his will and served him faithfully. Why should he not respond to her now, if she went to him pure of body and spirit and besought him to restore her child?

She declared her intention to Wolf Medicine. According to the ancient custom he led her out of her tipi and called aloud, proclaiming to the Sun and the people the object of her fast. Four

times he repeated the proclamation. He and the Tall Pine passed around the lodge four times and finally stood facing the Sun. Wolf Medicine then cried in a loud voice so all might hear:

"This woman, the Tall Pine, is fasting to build a Medicine Lodge to recover her lost child, the Dawn Mist."

He then prayed to the Sun interceding thus:

"O! Na-to-si, Master of Life!

"This is a virtuous woman. She desires to build a Medicine Lodge. Through her fast you will be benefitted, for rich gifts will be made to you. In return for the fast, the sacrifice and the offerings, grant the boon for which she will suffer!"

Then offerings were brought forth to propitiate the Great Mystery. A silk buffalo robe from the lodge of Eagle Plume and other treasures were dedicated to the Sun. Wolf Medicine presented these offerings, saying:

"O! Na-to-si, behold!

"I make you presents! Therefore I implore you to hear me. Grant the boon to the woman who is fasting for you!"

From now on, the Tall Pine was, in a sense, high priestess. Her time and thoughts were occupied with the occult rites of her sacred office. Not until the heat of summer, when the sun reached his greatest strength and the sarvisberries were ripe, would the Medicine Lodge be erected, but through the winter and the spring there were many preparations to be made.

After the proclamation she began to collect buffalo tongues and when the season came, she also busied herself gathering wild peppermint to use in curing them. In this unceasing labor she found relief. A religious ecstasy possessed her and she prayed constantly to the Sun-God, the Moon, the Mother Earth, the Morning Star and the Medicine birds and beasts, in her zeal hearing strange prophecies and believing with faith absolute that the girl would be restored.

She made preparations for the Dawn Mist's return, fashioning for her a new garment of elks' skin, strung with elks' teeth and beautified with porcupine quills, bears' claws and the fur of beaver. And as she wrought the wonderful garment she rocked and crooned over it and made strange, pathetic little prayers to the Master of Life:

"Oh! Sun! Fair was the morning that I bore her.

"You looked down and saw her. Your rays were bright and the mists of dawn curled and drifted and shone like white spirits. And when I took her in my arms, I cried,—you heard me,—she is as beautiful as the mists of morning and the Dawn Mist shall be her name!"

She also made many parfleches to hold the tongues and upon each of them she lavished tireless labor.

Her husband watched her with silent reverence, and the poor, distraught Night Wind, whose wits were completely scattered since his sister left, hovered about

her constantly at times, and at others disappeared completely.

So the long winter passed. The White Quiver was seldom in his tipi. He came and went like a ghost and though none knew of his secret wanderings, he often returned with scalps and more than once with ponies. His band-followers had sworn allegiance elsewhere so he was virtually alone among his tribesmen.

Spring broke through the icy shackles of winter and bloomed. The streams took up their interrupted songs; the prairie flowed green with tender new grass and flowers, the willows budded, the yellow-breast bubbled over with song and in the air was a wonderful caress like the moist, warm lips of a child. The braves hunted again and killed, and all the while the Tall Pine was gathering fresh tongues and wild peppermint and preparing for the building of the Medicine Lodge.

When she had collected the tongues of the spring killing, she took them to her lodge, laid them on newly gathered sage

and invited all the virtuous married women and the old wise men of the tribe to participate in the ceremonial of the boiling and peeling of the tongues.

The men sat on one side of the tipi and the women on the other. Each one entered very softly and with reverent mien. No outsider was allowed to come near the lodge lest he might disturb the solemn rites. When all were assembled, the Tall Pine took a forked stick made from the sarvisberry bush, with it lifted a burning coal from the fire and placed it on a heap of sweet-grass. The fragrant smoke uncoiled and rose like incense, filling the air with pungent odors. And as the scented smoke drifted sunward, the Tall Pine prayed to the Lord of Life.

"O! Sun! You have created in our hearts the desire to follow your ancient customs. Now help us to observe them according to your will. You know we are virtuous and therefore fit to be your priestesses."

She then prayed to the Moon, the

Morning Star, and the Mother Earth, invoking their help.

Na-to-si, the Sun, was symbolical of the spiritual element; Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, the Moon, was his wife; the Morning Star was their Son; Sach-Kum, the Mother Earth was the food-giver, the emblem of fertility.

The Tall Pine finished her prayer and sat down among the other priestesses. Each one, in turn, confessed to the Sun, the Moon and the Mother Earth. The rapt faces, the figures showing dimly through the curling incense of the smoke seemed unreal and weird, and the voices chanting strange rhythms, sounded like echoes out of the past. When all had spoken, the Tall Pine rose again, interceding for them, saying:

"O! Sun! O! Moon!

"These women are virtuous. Bless them; give them plenty to eat and keep them pure and good."

The assembled people regarded her reverently and listened attentively to each

word that fell from her lips, for she was now the acknowledged mediator between the tribe on the one hand, and the Sun on the other. In short she was High Priestess.

She finished her invocation and remained looking upward, far removed in religious exaltation.

Then a buffalo tongue was laid before every woman and each one was given a knife and a steel with which to sharpen the blade.

Wolf Medicine, who had been chosen Master of Ceremonies, stood erect and addressed the women:

"Now you will begin to skin the tongues. We do not want holes in them. If any woman among you makes a hole in the tongue it proves that she is not pure."

While he spoke the women made medicine over their hands, the knives and the steels, painting them with the sacred red pigment before touching the sacred meat.

When this ceremony was finished Wolf

Medicine repeated his solemn admonition.

The women, in turn, prayed and confessed again as they began the task which was to prove whether or not they were fit to participate in the festival of the Medicine Lodge. And as they began to peel the tongues, they prayed:

"O! Sun and Moon! You see me! Look down on me.

"O! Mother Earth I walk upon you. You also know me.

"I am pure.

"I was tempted to sin.

"Behold! I am virtuous!"

Thus one by one they related their life-stories, the temptations that had beset them in the flower of youth and their final triumph over the impulses of the flesh.

All during this time two women, also of spotless character, sat by the lodge door. Between them was a kettle under which a cloth was spread. They, too, made medicine with the sacred paint. Then they took a stout stick and began

to sing, going through the pantomime of thrusting the stick through the handle of the kettle and so raising it, four times. The fourth time they lifted it from the ground. They provided themselves with a wooden bowl and a spoon made of buffalo horn, with which to dip water to fill the kettle. Four times they went through the pantomime of dipping water.

Then they started for a little stream that flowed near-by, imitating the grunting, bellowing noise of the buffalo as he seeks drink in the fall. They bore the kettle swinging from the stick which was run through the handle, a woman holding either end. As they moved forward they looked down, never raising their eyes. Four times they stopped to rest before coming to the stream. When they reached the running water they went through the pantomime of dipping into it four times, before beginning to fill the vessel, always dipping it up with the horn spoon and the wooden bowl.

During their absence the women and

the wise men within the lodge, sang sacred chants and the water carriers approaching paused to listen for the note of one particular song. It was understood that the water bearers should wait thus, until certain words were sung. By this signal, they should know when to enter. Accordingly they waited, immovable as graven stone, until these words rose on the lilt of a joyous note:

"Now persons come with goods and blessings!"

At that verbal sign the water women entered. Wolf Medicine and his fellow priests, the Sacred woman, the Tall Pine, and her helpers blessed them as they appeared at the lodge door, chanting:

"Na-to-si, the Sun, Co-co-mik-e-t'sum, the Moon, Sach-kum, the Mother Earth; see this offering of water and therefore you are blessed."

Thus began the ceremonial of boiling the consecrated tongues. Four times the water bearers approached the fire and essayed to put the kettle on the tripod,—

the fourth time fixing it thereon. The sign of four was the charm which insured the Sun-God's blessing. Dried meat, pounded up finely for pemmican, was in readiness and as the grease rose to the surface of the water in which the tongues were boiling, the women skimmed it off carefully, using the buffalo horn spoon. They poured this over pounded meat and made pemmican for the feast which was to come.

The tongues were boiled, cured and dried, then put away in the parfleches made by the Tall Pine.

As these cases were opened to receive the sacred meat, the same ceremony was repeated; they were opened very slowly, carefully, reverently, and the assembled devotees enacted the pantomime of putting the consecrated meat in the cases four times before storing it away, to remain until it should be needed in the holy rites of the Medicine Lodge.

The solemn ceremony came to an end.

The Tall Pine had taken the first step towards becoming a Medicine woman.

CHAPTER XIV

THE sun became more brilliant day by day and in his growing strength pushed back the shadowy night until the dawning came early over the prairie and twilight was slow to descend. The pale, spring sky, tossed and turbulent with clouds, deepened into an infinite royal-blue course for the flaming chariot of the Lord of Day. And as the air grew warm the thunder came up out of the south with a mighty clanging as of cymbals, the violet dart of lightning and a flying pageant of sable clouds. The coming of this awful bird of the heavens was hailed with delight, for as he traveled, his flaming trail, the lightning, scattered fecund rain that made the world bloom and the berries grow. So when the first distant boom of the storm was heard, Wolf Medicine, in the pres-

ence of many worshipers, unwrapped the Sacred Pipe stem, fitted it to the Thunder pipe and smoked and danced to the deity amid the blinding flame of lightning brands and the huge concussion of the thunder-shock. Furiously he danced, the terrible illumination playing over him; his voice raised in the sacred thunder songs, mingling with the roar of the storm. During the ceremony warriors counted *coups,* smoked and ate sarvisberries after giving the first portion to Sachkum, the Mother Earth.

After this, myriads of flowers sprang up out of the warm, moist ground. Purple lupine lay like haze on the hills, wild sunflowers tossed in a sea of gold before a great, boisterous, romping wind, gentians opened their blue eyes on the world, Indian Paint Brush flamed crimson, wild roses unfolded their delicate petals and all of the countless blossoms of the flower-world decked the prairie until its tawny face was a paradise of bloom. Willows, quaking asps and dwarf maples were

newly, tenderly green. The beavers came cautiously out of their winter lodges and the song birds returned to mate and nest and make the woods vocal with song.

All of these signs pointed to the Moon of Flowers, the ripening of the sarvisberries and the approach of the season for building the Medicine Lodge. To the White Quiver they indicated as surely that the Kootenais under Spotted Horse would soon be at the rendezvous at Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain.

There was a stir of expectation among the people for they knew they would soon be on the march. Only the Night Wind was sorry to leave this playground. He had gathered eggs on the margins of small lakes and in marshes as he and the Dawn Mist had done in days gone by. In the woods he had bird and squirrel friends to whom he had become attached. He spent much time in their company, talking and laughing to them and they, with subtle instinct, seemed to know that he was more of their kind than that of the

destroyer, man. Another favorite sport of the Night Wind was the snaring of eagles. On the crest of a butte he dug a pit, placed in it a piece of bloody meat and close by a stuffed fox skin so a fox appeared to be feeding on the carrion. To the meat he tied a stout thong which he held in his hand. Before daybreak he concealed himself in the pit beneath a false roof of juniper interwoven with boughs. There he waited. He kept with him a human skull that its ghost might make him invisible and protect him from the eagles' claws. He saw the eagles soaring overhead, wheeling lazily in the blue. He knew right well that their keen eyes could see the bait from a great height. At last a bird descended with a heavy swoop, thinking to steal the meat from the fox, and as it landed the Night Wind grabbed its feet and wrung its neck with a deft twist of his strong hands. He then thrust a piece of pemmican in its beak so its spirit might tell its fellows in the Great White Desert that the Night

Wind had treated it well. Sometimes he caught many birds in one day. Their wings were used for fans, their tail feathers for war-bonnets and the quills for arrows because they were swift-flying and light.

When his straying fancy returned to the thought that the time was nearly come when he must bid these haunts and pleasures good-bye, the Night Wind was grieved. He came to the camp only to sleep and to eat.

He had been absent as usual all one day from sunrise until twilight deepened into night, when, suddenly he rushed into his father's lodge, panting sorely, his eyes wild with fear and with froth over his lips. Eagle Plume and the White Quiver were together. They had been discussing the meeting with the Kootenais. Eagle Plume questioned the boy, and at length, shuddering, writhing and with awful distortions, he said:

"The little squaw squirrel had been in a temper, her heart was bad and she quar-

reled with her brave. I was telling her the folly of it when,—"

He broke off and looked around fearfully.

". . . I heard a *spirit voice.* O! It wailed and moaned and cried as the wind mourns on dark nights when there is no moon and the clouds run thick and fast like a wolf pack. I could feel the tears in that voice yet I knew it was nothing human that could weep. I did not know before that doomed souls were so sad . . . I could not tell whence the sound came for it seemed to come from everywhere, —down from the sky, up out of the earth where the Under-Ground people are, and from the homeless winds. I was frightened. I wanted to fly but the twilight was thick and murky and full of shadowy beings, and I was afraid of the Voice! . . . Then, ah! then Ky-O, the witch woman, appeared with the wolf-dog and . . ."

"And what? Speak!" the White Quiver cried sharply.

". . . And I saw through the pines *a ghost.* When the witch woman saw me she cursed and struck out at me with her staff and set the wolf-dog on me. He sprang at my throat and I ran here with all the evil spirits after me."

As he ceased speaking a fit seized him. His eyes rolled, he bit his tongue, foam oozed from his drawn lips and his limbs became rigid. After this he lay in a stupor for many hours.

"Poor boy! His dreams are killing him. The Dawn Mist could soothe him but we cannot," said Eagle Plume sorrowfully.

"But are they dreams? What is this awful thing he may have seen?"

"Nothing,—nothing but a cloud or a shadow and the crying of the wind."

"That may be, but I will go and search."

The White Quiver heeded no advice and all night long he beat about the woods blindly, impotently and with no result. When the Night Wind came to from his

stupor he could or would tell nothing coherent and when the White Quiver begged the poor, distraught boy to go with him and show him the place where he had seen Ky-O and heard the Voice, he was all but seized with another convulsion of fear.

The incident passed and was forgotten by all save the White Quiver who was haunted by the weird story. He believed the Night Wind had seen Ky-O. Where had she been since the Moon of Yellow Leaves? What did her coming now forebode? And what in all the black and evil domain of her accursed medicine was this ghost that flitted after her in the twilight of the pines?

CHAPTER XV

EAGLE PLUME was a great warrior but he fought only when he must and in his heart he was a man of peace. Therefore he approved of the truce agreed upon by Spotted Horse and the White Quiver, between the Piegans and the Mountain People who had been formidable enemies in the past, and he determined to march northward to Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain, to show his good will. He decreed that the Medicine Lodge be built there and the ceremonies held in the presence of the strangers. Nothing could be more fortunate than their coming at this season when the greatest festival of the twelve Moons would take place and the whole tribe be assembled in the fulness of militant glory. Perhaps mingled with the newly-begotten feeling of friendliness in

the bosom of Eagle Plume there was the desire to impress his whilom foes.

At the Great Chief's command the people were informed through heralds of the I-kun-uh-kah-tsi, that the time was close at hand when they must break camp and strike out towards the Cold Country where the Tall Pine would build a Medicine Lodge for the recovery of her lost child, the Dawn Mist. They were also told of the coming of the Kootenais and warned upon pain of severe punishment to treat them as honored guests.

The ceremony of the Medicine Lodge was complex with strange ritual and mystic form and it was vital that each detail be carried out by the rules given to Scarface, by the Sun. According to the ancient story a youth named Scarface, fell in love with a maiden who belonged to the Great Mystery. Scarface was very poor and on his cheek there was a scar. Though the people jeered at him, he was in reality the son of a mortal mother and Epi-so-ax, the Morn-

ing Star. When he asked the maiden to be his wife she told him that he must first get permission from the Sun. Scarface set out to find the Sun's lodge asking the different animals the way. Morning Star, his father, took him before the Lord of Life and he remained long in the celestial kingdom. One day he saved the life of the Morning Star who was the only child of the Sun and Moon and in gratitude the Sun gave him the hand of the maiden whom he loved. But before he sent him earthward to his reward by the Wolf Trail, that milky path which is the short way from heaven to earth, worn by the tread of spirit feet in their restless wanderings, he removed the scar from the young man's face, dressed him in strangely beautiful raiment and made him comely to look upon.

Then the Sun said:

"Behold I am Chief of the Universe.

"I made the world with its mountains, its prairies, its streams and valleys. I also made man and the beasts of the air

and the fishes that dwell in the waters. I made them all and therefore they are mine.

"I have seen the days and I know all things from the Beginning to the End.

"Only I have no beginning and no end. Men and birds and beasts and growing things spring up and live a little while, then die. But I live always. Therefore I am eternal, supreme. In the Moon of Budding Leaves I am young; in the Moon of Flowers when the berries are ripe I am strong; in the Moon when the snows are heavy and the jack-rabbit whistles at night I am weak and old, but when the chinook comes, the snows melt and the flowers bud, lo! I am young again and so on forever, without end.

"I am the Great Father! I am the Spirit.

"Of all the birds of the air the raven is wisest because he always provides himself with food. Therefore he is of the Sun and my favorite.

"Of all the animals, E-ē-neo, the buf-

falo is the best. His tongue is sacred to me.

"Of all the things that grow in the ground the berries are the best. They, too, are sacred to me.

"Of all the herbs and flowers the sweet-grass is the best and its fragrance the most pleasing to me, therefore it shall be burned as incense so its pleasant odors may bear the prayers of my earth-children to me."

Then the Sun said:

"Come with me and I will show you the world."

He took Scarface to the rim of the sky.

The world lay far below them. It looked small and round and flat and it was encircled by walls of infinite space.

Then the Sun said.

"You see the world. You see how it looks from my lodge which is the sky.

"Go back to your people and tell them that I will hear the prayers of all women who are chaste. If a woman who has a husband or child sick or in danger let her

build for me a lodge that is like the world, —round and with walls. But before she builds the lodge she must cause to be made a sweat house of one hundred willow branches. The form of this must be like the sky. Half of it must be painted black for the night and the other half red, which is for me.

"The woman who builds the lodge must fast for four days to prove her virtue. Four is the sacred number and must be observed in all ceremonies to me. If she be pure I will shine upon her and if she be false I shall send rain. And when her fast shall end if she prove worthy there shall be a feast of my food which is the tongue of the buffalo."

The Sun gave Scarface the whole of the sacred ritual, the songs and ceremonies and when he returned to earth with the scar removed from his face, clad in garments such as had never been seen before, and with the two raven feathers in his hair, he was hailed as a Prophet of the Sun. He told the people all that the Sun

had said and taught them even as the Sun had taught him.

He claimed the maiden whom he loved for his bride and she was glad for she knew by the sign of the raven feathers that the Sun had sanctioned the marriage.

Then the first Medicine Lodge was built in accord with the divine command and every year in the Moon when the sarvisberries are ripe and the flowers bloom and the Sun is in the height of his prowess and glory, the Medicine Lodge is built again as it was in the beginning. The form has never changed and a mistake forebodes disaster, dishonor and death.

When at last Scarface and his wife passed painlessly to the Spirit World, he joined his father, the Morning Star in the skies where he may be seen shining in the bosom of the dawn even unto this day. The Indians know him and hail him as Mon-yan, the New Robe or the False Morning Star.

A Medicine woman, who had fasted

the year before to build a Medicine Lodge, and her husband; a man of holiness and sapience, were in constant attendance, instructing the Tall Pine in her occult office.

When the whole tribe was ready to move, the former Medicine woman produced a travois painted with the consecrated red, the sun-color, as were also the parfleches containing the tongues. Four times the act of hitching the travois to the horse, and four times the pantomime of loading the parfleches on the travois were repeated.

A buffalo robe was spread on the ground, the Tall Pine with veiled face was placed upon it and as she lay motionless the people offered up prayers for her to the Sun. Then after four attempts she was raised to the back of her horse and she, with Wolf Medicine, whom the Chiefs had made Master of Ceremonies, led the march.

A small party of warriors acting as scouts rode ahead to reconnoiter the coun-

try, watch for buffalo and lurking enemies. They were also to choose good camping places along the way. One or more of them came back frequently to the main body of the tribe to report.

Each evening as they stopped for their night's rest, the Tall Pine was lifted from her horse after the symbolic four attempts and the people prayed for her to the Great Mystery in the Sun.

This was the season of the summer chase and the young braves hunted as they went. Sometimes the tribe halted and camped for several days while the warriors sallied forth and brought in plentiful kills of buffalo and antelope. All of the fresh tongues were carefully collected, boiled and peeled according to the same stern ritual.

Then they took up the march afresh until they had journeyed long and far. Each sunset brought them nearer the coral cone of Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain, which stood somewhat separate and apart from the great bond of the range.

Everyone knew that in the shadow of that peak the journey would end and everyone recalled how, upon its lofty summit where the Thunder Bird nested and brought forth its progeny of storm, the White Quiver had confronted the Wind-God and received from him the sign that saved the tribe from starvation. Therefore this vicinity was sacred ground.

The choice of a suitable site for the Medicine Lodge was left to the scouts. There were many things to consider in such a selection, but first in importance was the necessity for plenty of good poles. As they neared Chief Mountain, soldiers of the I-kun-uh-kah-tsi were sent two or three days' march ahead and when they found a fitting place their leader rode back and informed the Chiefs and Medicine men.

Four camps fire before reaching their destination they built the first sweat lodge and each day thereafter another was built until there were four. They were made in this manner: a hole about a foot

and a half in diameter and six inches deep was dug. Around it one hundred pliable branches of willows which had been cut by warriors of the different bands, who had fasted for a day, were planted and fastened together at the top, forming a low, circular structure shaped like the dome of heaven. This was covered with buffalo hides by the Medicine men and on top of it was placed a buffalo skull with the horns intact, painted on one side with red dots to represent the Sun, and on the other with black dots symbolical of the Moon and Stars. A fire was kindled outside, upon which to burn sweet-grass for incense and to heat one hundred stones the size of a man's hand that had been collected by warriors, who had also fasted for one day.

When this was done the Tall Pine, with her attendants came out from the sacred tipi and after making the circle of the sweat house, took her place facing the sunset. They waited there until they saw the

smoke from the sweet-grass rising, the signal that the stones were hot. They sang four songs and as the fourth came to a close, the hot stones were passed into the lodge one by one. With the sacred spoon of buffalo horn, Wolf Medicine and the priest poured water, little by little, on the stones until clouds of steam enveloped them. After they had sweated and were cleansed in body and spirit, they chanted prayer-songs to the Sun four times, then four times made as if to raise the buffalo hide covering, the fourth time lifting it in the direction whence the sun rises, then in the direction whence he sets.

A vast chorus of deep voices rose, chanting to Na-to-si, that the sweat lodge was built for him.

When the sweat was over Wolf Medicine and the priests came out and the feast of consecrated tongues began.

During the sweat the Tall Pine and her helpers, covered with buffalo hides, had remained sitting on the sunset side of the lodge. The soldiers who were helpers of

"A GREAT WARRIOR . . . FOLLOWED BY THE SOLDIERS, RODE OUT TO THE SPOT IN THE FOREST WHERE THE COTTONWOOD GREW."

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the Medicine men, sat in a half-circle close by. The Tall Pine and her women brought one of the parfleches and presented it to the warriors. One of the women went through the motion of untying the case four times, the fourth time opening it reverently. Wolf Medicine, assisted by a priest, divided the dried tongues, breaking them into small pieces, and giving a portion to each of the braves. As the tongues were divided solemn prayers were made, and before a morsel passed their lips they first offered the meat to the Sun, then planted a bit in the ground as an offering to Mother Earth and the Under-Ground people.

After the feast the covers of buffalo hide were removed from the sweat house, the Tall Pine and her attendants returned slowly to the sacred tipi and the people dispersed and went their way.

This was the signal that the cutting of the poles to build the Medicine Lodge was about to begin.

Though the time for the great cere-

mony was nearly at hand the Kootenais had not come. Eagle Plume began to fear that Spotted Horse had repented his promise. He permitted the White Quiver to go to Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain, to watch for the visiting tribe.

Meantime the preparations went on uninterruptedly in the Sun Dance camp. Wolf Medicine, the Master of Ceremonies, despatched a herald, who cried out sonorously so all might hear, that the people must cut a center pole and also smaller poles for the Medicine Lodge. For the center pole they must be careful to select a straight cottonwood with good forks.

The Mad Dogs had prepared the sacred tipi for the Tall Pine and the Medicine Bonnet which was the emblem of her exalted office. Every relation of her clan or gentes contributed something towards the purchase of this bonnet. Some had given buffalo robes, others ponies and others yet, more modest of fortune, donated little personal ornaments. Eagle

Plume made up the balance needed and it was a large price that he paid the owner, the former Medicine woman, for the Great Medicine, the Bonnet made from the head of the bull elk, which was essential to her as the Lodge Giver.

During the Tall Pine's fast of four days, she could eat no food and no drop of clear water could she drink to quench her thirst. Just before sunrise and after sunset one clam-shell full of water mixed with red clay was given her but that was all.

She lay in a kind of trance, often dreaming of her lost child, hearing voices speaking out of the emptiness and always praying to the Sun, the Moon, the Morning Star and the Mother Earth with the awful fervor of a devotee.

"O! Mother Earth!" she would croon, "Hear me! You yourself are a mother. From your womb spring the trees, the flowers, the streams and mists that are the spirits of the streams. If you love your children take pity on my mother-love and

send my Dawn Mist back to me in the arms of the morning!"

At other times she cried out in fright, thinking she heard the accusing beat of raindrops on the lodge. Upon clear weather everything depended. This fast was the supreme test of her virtue. If rain fell all was lost and she would be condemned in the eyes of the tribe, for the Sun-God sent rain only when the Medicine woman broke her fast or was unclean.

And all the while through the silence, sounded the sibilant, shrill piping of a whistle of eagle-bone blown by Wolf Medicine to keep away the rain.

While the Tall Pine fasted and prayed the people were occupied with the finding of a tree such as Wolf Medicine had described for the center pole of the Medicine Lodge, and the cutting of smaller poles and brush to be used in constructing its walls and roof.

A band of chosen soldiers from the different societies, who were sent to search

for the center pole, rode back announcing that they had found a perfectly straight cottonwood, with a suitable fork at the branching of the limbs.

The Tall Pine selected a great warrior who had once returned victorious from the war-path without one of his party having shed a drop of blood, to cut the cottonwood. This was a mark of honor and esteem. He, with three other Chiefs, making four in all, rode out followed by the soldiers, to the spot in the forest where the cottonwood grew. It was indeed a fair tree with shining bark and leaves of glossy green lined with silver and from it fell tiny, white flakes like spirits of the snow. The advancing soldiers halted. The four chosen warriors dismounted. The leader, he of the bloodless victory, told four stories of triumph and glory. Each of the others in turn counted four *coups*. The soldiers of the various bands were drawn up a little distance to the rear with arrows aimed and guns cocked. Then the leader stepped forward with an

ax painted the sacred sun color and struck the tree. As the steel bit into the bark sending the silvery chips flying, prayers were offered that the tree might fall easily with its branches flat and unbroken.

The cottonwood tottered on its shining bole and simultaneously the war-cry pealed forth in a volume of vibrating sound that made the forest ring. In another moment the tree crashed to earth. Guns and arrows were fired into it in a furious fusillade and the soldiers rushed at it and closed in upon it as if it were a vanquished enemy.

The limbs were trimmed, but unhappily some had been crushed and broken; the tree was cut the proper length and prepared to load on the travois which stood ready to receive it. Four times they essayed to put it on the travois, the fourth time securing it firmly and starting for the site of the Medicine Lodge.

According to the number of its chiefs, each band contributed its share of poles, which were dragged to the place chosen

for the sacred structure by women on horse back. They rode into camp in four columns, from the sunrise, the sunset, the Cold country and the Warm country, the women marching behind and chanting incessantly as they came. The cutting and carrying of the poles was impressive and solemn, followed even to the least detail according to the rules given to Scarface by the Great Mystery which dwells in the Sun, before the building of the first Medicine Lodge in the Spring of the World. The sacred number of four with its magical charm was observed in every movement. They omitted nothing, dared nothing new, prayed that no mistake be made so Na-to-si would smile upon them, answer their prayers and grant the Tall Pine's boon.

The sun rose strong and bright on the fourth day of the Tall Pine's fast. His first illuminating beams struck the purpling mountains, that mid-land between the spirit world and the earth where the great gods dwell,—and as he soared

higher into the blue, a tide of amber light flowed over the prairie where the briar roses and purple asters and shy violets, still wet with dew, bloomed and mingled with the golden grass and the gray-green sage.

Just before sunrise the Tall Pine and Eagle Plume had been wakened with a song.

The camp was quick with expectation. Horsemen flashed across the great circle of the lodges, there was a general movement and the indefinable stir of suppressed excitement. Then heralds, gaily bedizened, each wearing the characteristic dress of his band, rode through the camp crying loudly:

"Hai Ye!

"The Great Chief, Eagle Plume, bids you make ready for the grand parade. The tribe will march from Eagle Plume's lodge when Na-to-si, the Sun, stands in the middle of the sky!"

The Owl Brave, Three Moons and some others of the Mosquito Band were

outside their society lodge as the herald passed.

"The Great parade is about to start," said Three Moons, "but there is no sign of the Kootenais. The mad chief, White Quiver, has gone away to hide because he is ashamed. He fears to count *coups* in the Medicine Lodge. When he returns we will worry him. He shall feel the sting of the Mosquitos!"

The young men laughed loudly. They were already rejoicing over the White Quiver's disgrace. The crucial time was at hand and he had not made good.

Every tipi was the scene of elaborate preparation. Chiefs, warriors, untried striplings, women and children painted their faces and bodies with bright pigments as they peered into polished metal mirrors. They perfumed themselves with sweet-grass, camomile blossoms, meadow rue, beaver, musk and balsam pine. Then from the depths of parfleche cases the ceremonial costumes of the family were taken. Into these the women put

their highest conception of art, their greatest skill and their loving tribute of patient toil. Many of the older women's eyes had grown dim and blind that their lords might enter the Medicine Lodge and measure strength with their peers in costumes befitting heroes.

Even the horses were sumptuously caparisoned. Beautifully wrought breast collars and cruppers adorned them; on their backs were lavishly beaded saddle blankets; their bridles were marvels of cunning craftsmanship and their tails were caught up and fastened with gaily hued feathers. Every proud move they made was responded to by the tinkling of tiny bells. The women's saddles were constructed of bone and the richest of them had pommels of deer and elks' antlers.

The soldiers carried shields made of thick hide from buffalo hump which was impervious to arrows. These shields were tied with bunches of bright feathers. The most wealthy men had bows of

polished elk horn. Fans of eagle wings and hawk feathers fluttered in the breeze and every soldier was armed with his spear, knife, bow and arrows.

Resplendent with such accoutrements little groups of people rode or walked to the lodge of Eagle Plume where the parade was forming. They were light-hearted and happy and snatches of song burst from their lips unpremeditatedly as it does from the throats of birds, for with the austere religious spirit that marked the ceremonial of the Medicine Lodge, the young people mingled fun and merry-making. And now, the Night Wind, disguised as a buffoon, raced madly about imitating a buffalo bull, charging timid old women and scattering groups of children and barking curs at every rush. He turned somersaults on the back of his pony, poised on one foot on the animal's back and cut grotesque capers with his black robes fluttering in the air and his head encased in a buffalo mask.

The drums beat, the whistles sounded,

Eagle Plume advanced slowly on his night-black horse. And if his chiefs and warriors were richly arrayed, he outshone them as the sun outshines the stars. His war-bonnet of picked eagle feathers hung to the parfleche soles of his moccasins. From the beaded band which clasped his brow was a deep fringe of winter weasel skins. His finely tanned elk hide shirt was thickly sewn with elks' tusks, and ermine skins formed fringes on his sleeves. His leggins and moccasins were embroidered with black and yellow porcupine quills wrought in an elaborate pattern,—the devotional tribute of his wife and child who was gone—the Dawn Mist. In his ears were earrings of white shells. His necklace was of bear claws and ropes of wampum fell to his waist. About him was folded a mantle of beaver buffalo worth many horses. His forehead was painted with a red disc for the Sun and in his hair were two raven feathers, the sign that his wife was building a Medicine Lodge. But the Great Chief looked old.

His noble face showed mastery of himself, without which there is no strength, but it also showed what the price of that victory had been. His brow was furrowed with deep lines, his black hair was streaked with gray and his eyes had the restless look of one who seeks in vain.

Then followed the three branches of the Blackfeet nation,—the Piegans, the Bloods and the big-bodied North Blackfeet, and the different bands of the I-kun-uh-kah-tsi in regular order according to the rank and age of the members, the band chiefs riding at the heads of their societies. Immediately behind Eagle Plume came the members of his band, the Braves. They wore moccasins which had no ankle tops, embroidered with porcupine quills; each was armed with knife, bow and a large quiver of arrows. They also carried long, peeled poles bound with red and black cloth, tipped with a spear point and ornamented with feathers and little bells.

The Sinopaix or Kit-fox Society whose

Medicine was a fox skin, marched in characteristic order, forming and traveling in the shape of a fox's head. The Chief preceded his comrades and represented the fox's nose. He wore a fox skin, the head of which was fashioned into a hood. The tail, tied with bells, hung down his back. His face was painted green. Next came two men of lesser rank who represented the eyes. The rest of the band followed *en masse* carefully preserving the form of the Medicine animal's head.

The Mosquitos, of which the Owl Brave was chief, wore buffalo robes with the fur outside and bracelets of eagle talons. Each had a plume tied in his hair.

The Bulls were distinguished by a head dress made from the heads and horns of buffalo bulls.

The Mad Dogs, the Society of the White Quiver; the Doves, the Crow Bears and the rest fell in and marched in their appointed places.

Eagle Plume rode forward very slowly.

He surveyed the legions which were his subjects. As if in subtle accord with his will the living mass vibrated, thrilled, wavered for a moment then flowed like the tide of a mighty river. Simultaneously, a vast volume of sound,—the lilt of a race-old song, broke from their lips and throbbed in varying cadence through the breathless, sun-steeped air. Onward they rode, phalanx upon phalanx, swinging in the orbit of a mighty circle. Glint of steel and gleam of color flashed and flamed far out over the prairie, and ever and anon, keeping time with the rhythmic motion of the riders, came the note of the weird-sweet song, full of tears that are never shed, sobs that never break and formless yearning which is never satisfied.

The huge circle uncoiled its miles around the circumference of the camp and when the parade was finished the sun hung low over the "Backbone of the World."

As the shadows lengthened and the light

mellowed into ruddy gold, the Tall Pine, amid solemn singing, was dressed in the Medicine robe of elkskin, the Medicine Bonnet of bull-elk head was placed on her brow and she, with her husband who bore a stalk of rhubarb which represented the bull-elk's bugling; Wolf Medicine and her attendants, left the lodge. Very slowly and reverently, with bowed heads and measured steps, they proceeded in a circle following the Sun's course and pausing four times, on their way to the site of the Medicine Lodge.

On the sunset side of the sacred edifice a shelter of pines and brush had been built for the women assisting the Tall Pine and the parfleches containing the consecrated meat. These parfleches were now brought forth, with the same deliberation, always observing the pantomime of unfastening them four times before they were finally opened. Each of the devoted and stainless women was given a tongue. Holding a bit of consecrated meat aloft in her right hand she faced

the setting sun, telling her life-story even as the warriors counted *coups,* relating her victories of peace as they told of their conquests in war. Humbled in the presence of the great Sun Power each devotee bared her heart, confessed her sins and transgressions, and in a state of religious exaltation offered herself to the Sun. She then made her prayer for her sick and those who were in danger, asking that they be restored to health and preserved from harm. When this invocation was done she gave a portion of the meat to the Mother Earth and the Earth people.

After each woman had received her portion of tongue, the soldiers divided the meat that remained and gave a small piece to each person.

Then came the ceremonial of the cutting of the hide. A green buffalo hide, in which there was no flaw or small part missing, was laid upon the ground. Four men were chosen to cut it into strips. Each one of these counted four different

coups when they were done. Wolf Medicine painted the steel for sharpening the knives with the sacred red paint as he had at the ceremony of the peeling of the tongues, and he prayed to the Sun that these men might cut the hide right, as a mistake was earnest of disaster and death.

The Owl Brave was one of the chosen four. The cutting then proceeded amid profound silence. There was an involuntary stir, an exclamation from the women;—the Owl Brave's knife slipped and he made a mistake.

Each person paid guns, blankets and furs for strips of this hide to be used in fastening the poles together on the Medicine Lodge.

When the sun hung low over the purple mountain-tips, Eagle Plume arose. With solemn mien and deep, resonant voice he ordered the people to prepare for the raising of the center pole.

The soldiers of the different Societies disappeared to return painted and clad

in splendid attire. Forming a hollow square the lines of which were parallel to the four points of the compass, they stood around the hole dug for the center pole, holding long poles bound with stout thongs near the top, for the purpose of lifting the heavy trees to be used in the construction of the Medicine Lodge. Band after band marched up, singing. As they assembled, a volume of melody burst from their lips and in unison they chanted the Raising of the Pole, handed down through countless generations.

The four lines of the hollow square advanced towards the center pole from the directions of the Cold country, the Warm country, the sunrise and the sunset. Wolf Medicine, the Tall Pine, Eagle Plume and the Medicine man and woman of the past year with the priests and helping women passed slowly, one by one into the hallowed precincts of the Medicine Lodge.

As the soldiers advanced for the fourth time, they formed themselves into a cir-

cle around the Medicine Lodge and sang the solemn "Hymn to the Pole."

A bundle of birch shoots had been fastened in the forks of the center pole to prevent it from splitting when the heavy timbers were put in place. Upon this Wolf Medicine perched. He was painted black, the symbolical color of victory and night. He waved his sable robe, piped and shrilled on his medicine whistle of eagle bone, then leaped with one bound to earth and rushed to the sweat lodge.

The Tall Pine and Eagle Plume with the Medicine man and woman of the year before climbed into the forks. Facing the rising sun they sang:

"My Holy Lodge is rising with good luck
and safe from danger.
"My Holy Lodge is rising with good luck
and safe from danger."

Then turning around towards the left, following the sun's course, they faced the sunset chanting the same measure twice.

As they descended, the soldiers whistled with eagle-bone whistles, the signal for raising the pole. No weapon was displayed lest it offend the Sun.

Eagle Plume spoke again, admonishing the soldiers to raise the pole quickly for the Sun was about to set, and his wife, the Sacred woman, was famished and foredone.

A prayer was made to the Sun that each part of the lodge be firmly and faultlessly constructed so that no evil should befall the hands that erected it. The center pole swung slowly into position, but before it was fixed in the ground it swayed and tottered and leaned towards the Owl Brave. All eyes turned upon him. This, also, foreboded disaster and death.

By means of the thong-bound poles, the soldiers raised the timbers into place and the sides were banked with foliage.

The Tall Pine was growing weak and faint, though her religious ecstasy still strengthened her spirit. For four days she had tasted no food; for four days no

water save one clam-shell full mixed with earth, which had been given her just before sunrise and after sunset, had passed her lips. And all the while she had remained in the sacred tipi praying to the Sun to allow no drop of rain to fall and belie her virtue. Her prayers had been answered. The sky remained blue and the few scattered clouds that had winged their way above the rim of the horizon, had drifted away beneath the magic of Wolf Medicine's eagle-bone whistle, with never a hint of rain. Her sacrifice and fast were complete. Revered by her people, proved worthy by the Sun test, she sat down in the sacred tipi and ate.

The Sun sank, flinging his last, rose-gold streamers from out the mystery of space beyond the mountains. The Medicine Lodge, a verdant thing, symbolical of the blooming earth, resplendent with green branches and tender leaves, stood against the evening sky and the sun-glow flowing through it, hallowed it as if by a sign divine.

CHAPTER XVI

THE White Quiver waited on the summit of Nē-nas-ta-ko, the Chief Mountain, for the coming of Spotted Horse and his Kootenais. He never doubted the good faith of the chief, though the Moon of Flowers, the time named for his arrival, was at the full. From this mountain-top where he had encountered the Wind-God, he watched the west country, but two suns rose and set and only mists and cloud-shadows drifted across the yellow-green levels below.

The White Quiver was strangely serene, for in his heart he knew that his friend would soon be with him. Meantime he watched and dreamed. It seemed to him that he looked down on the world from some coldly ethereal star and the

sky was less remote than the earth. Clouds drifted far beneath his feet. On either hand the world fell away in vast declivities. To the sunrise twilight had already fallen,—it was a scene in dim blues and glorious purples. But to the west the sun hung in a ball of flaming red among gilded vapors, sending out broad shafts of ruddy light. In the valleys and ravines, seas of violet haze rolled away to the rim of the horizon where other ranges dim and distant seemed ephemeral cloud-shadows like those that trod the prairie with fleeting purple steps. Between the rolling blue sea of vapor and the paler blue of heaven, flowed a tide of red-gold light, touching each mountain peak, each tiny twinkling lake, until they flashed like jewels out of the dusk.

So the sunsets shadowed into nights and the nights paled into days until the morning of the second day. Then from his eyrie on the mountain-top the White Quiver looked down into the pulsing tide of amethyst haze, where flakes of mist

floated like white caps on the waves of the sea. Through the drifting blue something flashed and was lost. Again it appeared, bright as a vagrant sunbeam. He watched intently. It was the flash of arms! Little by little a vast column, glittering, multicolored as a bright-scaled serpent, glided out of the blue mystery of the distance into the brilliant white light of open day. It approached and grew and shaped itself into an army of horses and men. The Kootenai legions had come. He watched them swing over hilltops, descend and disappear behind timbered slopes to emerge with greater proportion and fresh detail as they drew nearer. It was a splendid pageant to look upon. The sun darts illuminated the gay colors of the warriors' costumes and touched their spears and accoutrements with glancing flames of reflected light. On they came and as they neared the rendezvous, the White Quiver built a signal fire to let Spotted Horse know that he had kept faith. He saw a party of

Piegan warriors ride out to meet the Mountain People.

He waited through the long day and at last Spotted Horse joined him on the crest of the mountain.

They embraced with the affection of brothers. At first their tongues spoke little, but their eyes met and each friend knew that the other was true. As long as daylight lasted they broke the silence only to discuss trivial things; the journey of the Kootenais; how they had delayed on account of good hunting. Spotted Horse reported a cold winter and the loss of many horses, and consequently, numbers of his young men had come afoot which also caused delay. He had with him not only his own tribe but a large band of Selish,—a gentle folk living in the mild and beautiful valley of the Bitter Root. But with the shades of night, after the fire-glow painted the rocks crimson, the reserve of daytime left their hearts bare and their thoughts found utterance. They smoked long together, in-

haling the sweet fumes of *l'herb* and watched the white ghosts of smoke writhe and drift in a fantastic dance.

"And the Dawn Mist has never been found?" asked Spotted Horse suddenly.

"No. . . . Her mother, the Tall Pine is fasting to build a Medicine Lodge for her recovery."

Spotted Horse asked and heard anew the story of her abduction. He pondered long and silently before he answered:

"Something in my heart tells me that the maid was stolen by one of your own tribe. Was there another who desired her?"

"Yes! The Owl Brave."

Cold sweat covered the White Quiver's body and he trembled.

Could it be that he and the rest had been burrowing in the dark like moles, while she had been a prisoner almost under their stumbling feet?

The two men talked long and earnestly and as they spoke the white rim of the moon rose and living forms of mountain,

lake and tree appeared out of the gloom. A more ethereal day of purple shades and pearly lights reigned over the sleeping earth.

The White Quiver sprang up erect with purpose.

"I put myself in your hands.

"I will obey you as a child obeys his father," he said.

They swore absolute secrecy. Not even Eagle Plume should know their suspicions.

The moonlight shone on the White Quiver's face and revealed the quickened hope that animated every feature and showed in each movement of his agile body.

When they had done speaking he looked questioningly at the stars. The Last Brother pointed to the horizon and he knew that the night was old.

"The dawn will bring the great day and we must go," he said. "Follow me, I will lead you safely."

They wrapped their robes around them

and began the descent, now emerging in moonlit spaces of pale, blue-white light, then passing into the shadowy darkness of the night. They crossed glittering threads of streams, cold snow-drifts, poised precariously along the brinks of black abysses, spurred on, driven by one mastering idea. The White Quiver was like one with winged feet as he flew onward with the resistless force of the north wind. Sometimes Spotted Horse paused to rest and breathe; sometimes he hesitated, half-fearful at the unseen menace of hidden depths, but he said nothing and followed the silent shadow of the flying figure ahead. Like two phantoms they flitted downward, onward, and the moon set and the east thrilled and quickened and it was light.

At length ghostly lodges showed through the dim twilight and they knew that they had come to their journey's end.

CHAPTER XVII

IN the history of the plains Indians there had never been a more magnificent spectacle than this encampment. The Blackfeet were full twelve thousand lodges strong and the allied Kootenais and Selish were in themselves a formidable force.

Spotted Horse and the White Quiver paused to look down on this tented city of the plains. The early morning air was mellow with odors breathed from the dew-drenched earth. Bursting into view in the first forerunning flush of sunrise were myriads of lodges. Suddenly as the "dusty stars" of the prairie, there had sprung up a vast encampment like the resting legions of a mighty army. The shadows dwindled and thinned. The light deepened into a crimson flush, striking the icy mountain crests that flashed

back the dawn signal, running quick silver-bright along the streams and illuminating the tipis whose cones lessened into the pigmy likeness of ant-hills in murky distances. A wonderful welter of gorgeously colored detail flamed out of the twilight and revelled in the sun as it cleared the horizon and reigned supreme in the sky. The huge double circle of the Piegan camp with painted tipis of many colors and strange devices lay just below them. These lodges bore the insignia or picture-record of their owners and the symbols of their medicine. Yonder was the azure cone of the Blue Thunder Lodge and near by the Otter Lodge with a design of otters, one behind the other, extending around its entire circumference. The rainbow tipi was arched with a tri-color representing the Thunder Chief roping in the storm. The bison lodge was painted with buffalo skulls and horns and there were countless others, each with its tutelary emblem. In spite of the variety of color and cabalistic sign

all had certain characteristics in common. One of these was a dark band around the base, the sign of Sach-kum, the Mother Earth, sown with pale discs, the "dusty stars" or puffballs which are meteors from heaven. At the tip of each cone was another band, symbolical of the sky. In this field were depicted the Sun and Moon, a cross for the Morning Star and his messenger, the butterfly who is the Sleep-Bringer; the Seven Brothers, the Lost Children and many other of the stellar constellations. In the space between the earth and sky symbols was wrought the device of the tipi.

Among that thick-sown multitude it was easy to distinguish the dwelling of Eagle Plume by its greater size, its Medicine, a red eagle looking at the Sun, and its position facing the door-way of the dawn. Near the splendid abode of the Great Chief was an humble little lodge, bearing the simple device of a snow-white quiver on a background of dull brown.

It was an heroic and impressive picture

framed by overshadowing mountains and arched by the limitless blue that arrested the vision of the Mountain Chief, Spotted Horse, and made him rejoice that the Piegans were friends rather than foes.

The camp was already astir. Spirals of thin smoke floated from kindling fires and hung lazily in the still air. Blanketed women carried water in buffalo paunch bags from the stream and young men were fetching horses from pasture in the hills. Though every move was quiet and orderly there was the tension of suppressed excitement. This was the day of that carnival of great deeds when warriors would count *coups* in the Medicine Lodge. Upon this occasion the ceremonial was fraught with extraordinary interest. During the past twelve moons strange things had happened. The White Quiver and the Owl Brave must settle a score of deadly hate. Each must unbosom himself unreservedly, truthfully in the presence of the Sun.

Out of the dawn sounded the throbbing

of drums, broken snatches of song and the loud, authoritative cry of heralds,—the mouthpieces of the Medicine men,—ordering the tardy to make haste and announcing the events of the day.

The two friends bathed in an icy stream, clad themselves fittingly and proceeded to the lodge of Eagle Plume, where the White Quiver presented Spotted Horse to the Great Chief. The tribal leaders embraced as brothers. Eagle Plume made the Kootenai Chief a gift of ten horses, a silk buffalo pelt and a rare ancestral relic; Spotted Horse, no less royal in his generosity, gave Eagle Plume a snow-white pony, magnificently caparisoned, a bow of polished elk-horn, white bear claws and many fine examples of his people's crafts.

"You are welcome!

"My heart feels good towards you and your tribe," said Eagle Plume. "My land is your land, my lodge is your lodge and I smoke with you in friendship which shall endure through every storm like yon-

der mountain who is Chief of the Northern Range."

The White Quiver acted at once as mediator and interpreter. Through him the ancestral foes were united in friendship.

The ceremonial pipe was brought forth, filled with *l'herb* and in solemn silence the three men breathed deep of its pleasant smoke, then wafted it like incense towards the Sun.

When these courtesies were exchanged, Spotted Horse and the White Quiver retired each to his own tipi to prepare for the crucial test, the measure of ultimate strength in the Medicine Lodge.

A weird, treble note sounded with subtly penetrating insistence, and, as if charmed by the spell of that unearthly music every noise was hushed and the camp listened, breathless.

It was O-ma-qui-tos, old Wolf Medicine, and the Sun Dance priests making the circle of the encampment, piping on their magic whistles of eagle-wing bone

and dancing with the holy inspiration of David, on their way to the Medicine Lodge.

That consecrated structure, ordained by the Sun and consecrated to his worship, faced the birthplace of the dawn—the East. Opposite the entrance was an alcove or altar lined with juniper where the Medicine men would preside.

As Wolf Medicine and the priests entered this holy place they announced to the people religiously assembled there, that they would fast for four days. By this it was known that the ceremonies would continue during that time.

The Medicine men were followed by the Tall Pine, who was hailed with reverence as the Lodge-Giver, Eagle Plume and their helpers. Places had been reserved for them near the center pole to the north of the Sun Altar where the priests sat on sweet pine boughs. The worshipers sat in a compact circle around the lodge. The center was left clear for the different bands of the I-kun-

uh-kah-t'si who would enact hero-stories there.

Wolf Medicine was stripped bare to the waist and his face, arms and body were painted brilliant yellow. On his forehead was a red disc to represent the Sun, and his cheeks were marked with signs recondite of meaning. He wore a medicine hat adorned with yellow plumes. Fluttering about his head and shoulders and hanging from his carven whistle were downy, yellow feathers which were a part of his mystical medicine. Tied around his neck and resting on his breast was a disc of shell. Gathered about his loins, hanging half-way down his naked legs was his medicine robe wrought with symbols of the Rain-roper, the Sun and Moon, the Morning Star, streaked sun-dogs and other figures of unmeasured power.

Now, one by one, devotees who had fasted, approached the altar and made sun offerings which they presented to the Medicine men with a filled pipe. Some brought sick children or afflicted relatives

for whose health and life they prayed. Wolf Medicine accepted these propitiatory gifts in the name of the Sun, and painted and blessed the givers thereof.

He stood, rapt, apart, possessed of terrible spiritual frenzy, his eyes fixed unflinchingly on the burning sun, his arms raised above his head. He made strange signs and incantations as he danced with a curiously monotonous upward spring to the tune of his own shill piping, facing first to the east and then to the west.

The bands of the I-kun-uh-kah-t'si entered, dressed in their society costumes. They hung their shields and weapons on the center pole and sat in rows.

The Owl Brave headed the Mosquitoes.

Spotted Horse, who was the honored guest, came in with the White Quiver and sat at his right.

There was a stir among the people and a concentrated flash of eyes first at the Owl Brave, then at the White Quiver and his friend.

The ceremonies proceeded.

Warriors fulfilled their vows and danced the terrible torture dance around the center pole, with rawhide thongs tied to skewers which were run through the flesh of their bleeding breasts.

The Medicine Lodge was many-sided in its purpose. First of all it was the Temple of the Sun where He, the Great Mystery, the Master of Life, vouchsafed to hear his mortal children's prayers. But it was more than this. It was also in character and purpose like the arena of ancient Rome. Here tests of manly endurance were made and vows consummated which had been pledged in battle or in the face of imminent danger to the Great Spirit for safe deliverance from peril and death. Here the nation's heroes recited their triumphs before the Highest Power, and with their society comrades enacted the dramatic stories of the war-path. From these life-dramas the warriors were judged and the Great Chief chosen from amongst them, for next to the occult wor-

ship of the Sun was hero-worship with its barbaric love of great deeds done and victories achieved through puissance and contempt of death. Here, too, the untried youths came to receive inspiration that upon maturity they might emulate the example of their fathers.

Eagle Plume was first to count *coups*. His subjects listened intently to the story of his splendid career. They had heard it now for many summers, and each year bearing its fruit of fresh adventure, left him as he had been since the famous fight in the Cypress hills, first warrior, noblest of heart and Head Chief of the allied tribes of the Blackfeet nation. But this time there were new lines on his noble face, he was less lithe and quick and in his black hair was a sprinkling of white, betokening an early coming of the winter of life.

He closed his story amid a din of war-cries, clashing of rattles and the beating of drums. Gifts were made to him and he. in turn, presented them to the Sun.

The Lord of the Universe rose and set upon three days and still the drama of the Medicine Lodge proceeded uninterrupted.

During the whole time the White Quiver and Spotted Horse sat together inseparable as brothers. The Kootenai chief wished to honor his friend publicly in the eyes of all the tribes present and to acknowledge the young Piegan as a man of superior strength who had generously spared his life.

The coming of Spotted Horse had a wonderful effect upon those who had jeered at the White Quiver's version of his journey to the Kootenai land. His presence was proof of the young chief's claims and Eagle Plume took care to announce that it was the White Quiver and none other who had secured peace between the contending nations and a compact which might be of everlasting benefit.

The eight braves who had deserted the White Quiver and proved traitors, in defence of their own honor, went over to

the rival band of the Mosquitoes of which the Owl Brave was chief. These men and the Owl Brave, himself, were chagrined at the good faith of Spotted Horse and the sudden high esteem into which the White Quiver had sprung. They determined to make a last desperate stand against him in their society ceremony in the Medicine Lodge.

The attention of the whole tribe was fixed on the Owl Brave and the White Quiver. All knew of the deadly feud between them and with breath-quickening interest the spectators awaited the moment when these enemies must measure their mettle in the arena.

On the fourth and last day the Mosquitoes were in possession of the field. Three Moons entered the sacred circle. The drums struck up a quick tattoo. Two beat loudly with rattles on a hide, and the air reverberated with the quavering treble of a chant.

Three Moons was a comedian and he filled his acting with ridiculous, mirth-

provoking antics which set people laughing. Still, beneath the laughter was tense excitement.

What would he say of the White Quiver's journey? Would he dare assail the young chief's honor in the presence of Spotted Horse?

Three Moons adroitly evaded the issue. His story was a burlesque and he was a clown.

He knew that on the one hand he was under the surveillance of his new master and on the other hand the White Quiver's lancing gaze never left him. Therefore he played the buffoon.

While he cut capers and made grimaces, a shadow fell, ever so slight and thin upon the world, yet no cloud marred the infinite blue of heaven.

The Owl Brave followed Three Moons.

A low, long sigh soughed from the breasts of the watchers. That was all. No word was spoken. Not an eagle feather stirred.

The shadow fell a little deeper.

As he began the recital of his life-history in a loud, bold voice, he turned his back resolutely upon the White Quiver but in spite of himself he caught the terrible challenge of his enemy's eyes, and as their fire burnt into his heart and branded it, the speeches he had carefully planned, the dare-devil bravado, the scorn and sarcasm he would have dealt out unmercifully to his foe; the spectacular pantomime he had practiced in jealously guarded solitude, were forgotten. He faltered. His followers, headed by Three Moons, gave the war-cry furiously in a desperate attempt to rouse him. If he should break down, all was lost.

He rallied and continued until he came to that part of his narrative where he must tell of his expedition in search of the Dawn Mist. He hesitated a moment, then began to recount the detail of his adventures; how he had followed the slightest trace of her all in vain.

And as he spoke, as if to belie him, that

subtle shadow from the cloudless sky became deeper and darker and more sinister. Birds began to flutter to rest in the trees and people whispered, fearfully:

"The Sun is angry. He hides his face!"

The orb of day, the Sun-God for whose worship these ceremonies were given, faded and dimmed into a dull-red coal that burnt rayless as a dead planet in the unimpeachable blue of heaven.

The Owl Brave articulated with difficulty. He stopped, looked desperately about him with the fear of God in his craven heart and dropped heavily to earth as if felled by an unseen blow.

Consternation reigned in the Medicine Lodge. His friends insisted that he had been taken suddenly sick.

But why did the Sun hide his face?

It was surely an augury that boded ill.

The White Quiver, turning to Spotted Horse, said in a low voice:

"The Sun-God is his accuser!"

The Owl Brave became conscious again and took his place with his band followers, his narrative unfinished.

The enveloping shadow which had changed mid-day into untimely dusk, lifted as gradually as it had come.

Wolf Medicine, with frenzied fervor, had been praying and piping all the while for the restoration of light and very slowly the gold filtered through the gloom and a burnished rim showed at the edge of the Sun.

The afternoon advanced. It was broad day again. The Mad Dogs were now in possession of the Medicine Lodge and with their counting of *coups* the Sun Dance ceremonial would end.

First came the old men who were long of speech and fond of enlarging on the brave events of their youth which by an inverse perspective, increased in importance as the years of their activity were farther removed by age. The younger generation had heard these self-same tales from childhood, but they listened with re-

spectful interest as they had two score winters before.

The long, warm, mid-summer afternoon drew towards its close, the mountains grew deeper purple and a topaz glow mellowed the still atmosphere. Little children began to fret and cry and patient mothers hushed and rocked and nursed them at their breasts. People were growing weary and a lethargy was settling over them.

The White Quiver was called.

At once there was a stir of fresh interest.

He stepped into the circle and hung his shield and spear upon the center pole.

He was stripped bare to the waist save for the snow-white quiver slung across his back which scarcely concealed the scars over his shoulder blades. He wore a bonnet of war-eagle feathers, buckskin leggins, a belt and sheath for his knife, beaded moccasins and a necklace of white shells,—his love token from the Dawn Mist. Of all the warriors who had

counted *coups* in the Medicine Lodge, there was none so simply clad as he. He had no devoted mother, sister, or wife to make fine raiment for him. Yet every eye was fixed on him with respect and even his enemies reluctantly admired the magnificent form, hard and strong and perfect of proportion, which was the key to the man's character. The White Quiver had kept his body inviolate and pure and he had spared no travail or hardship to gain the perfect physical development that was equalled by no young man of the tribe.

He removed his war-eagle bonnet and handed it to Wolf Medicine. One by one his other possessions followed until he had left but his quiver and the necklace of shells. His tipi, his pony, everything he owned, he gave to the High Priest as his offering to the Sun. The White Quiver had beggared himself.

He stood silent for a long moment by the center pole, his arms folded over his breast, his head bent in meditation. The

evening sun enveloped him in an aureole of gold, illuminating every swell of muscle and curve of limb.

He raised his eyes and his right hand to the declining orb which shone full upon him as though its searching beams would lay bare his soul.

"The Sun God looks down on me.

"He sees my heart and he knows I speak the truth!"

After an impressive pause he spoke again, very slowly, in measured tones, as if weighing well every word he uttered.

He said:

"When my father, the war chief, Clear Water, died in the Moon when the leaves turn yellow and the geese fly south, he spoke to me and his words were these: 'Listen, for I have seen the days. I have lived long and now I am going to the Great White Desert where my spirit friends await me. In my youth I have taken many scalps and stolen many horses but I have given to those who were poorer than I, until I, myself am poor. I give

you my Medicine Bundle, my bonnet of war-eagle feathers, and I charge you to go on the war-path and find the Pinto Pony, which is my great Medicine. That I give to you also and the memory of my name which you will never dishonor.

'If you pledge yourself to a quest be true to it even if your life is the price. Fear no man. Be clean of body and soul. Forget not that the Great Mystery in the Sun looks down on you and sees your heart, and keep nothing there of which you are ashamed. . . .

'If you remember these things when at last you pass to the Great White Desert as I am passing, you will go peacefully as a child in its mother's arms, who answers the call of the Sleep Bringer, the butterfly from the Morning Star.'

"These words live in my heart. I say them to you now because my life has been but the shadow cast by the light of their wisdom."

The White Quiver told briefly of the pilgrimage to Chief Mountain and his ad-

venture there, the meeting with the Wind-God and the miraculous capture of the Pinto horse. He described the great hunt, his wild ride, the pursuit of the white buffalo and the mysterious arrows that had followed him. At this point he paused and turned towards the Owl Brave who was idly tracing figures on the ground.

Not a breath stirred. People sat motionless as stone, riveted with interest intense.

He continued the narrative rapidly, but still in low, even tones describing how he rode for his life towards the butte with the arrows obeying the projection of a murderous aim, always following him, until he was struck and wounded. He pointed to the scar. He enacted the killing of the white buffalo cow, his return in triumph and his offer of the Pinto Pony and the sacred white hide to Eagle Plume in return for the Dawn Mist. He related the bloody event of the war party he had led towards the Kootenai country;

recounted dispassionately but relentlessly his desertion by the eight faint-hearted braves, and his solitary journey to the pass across the range.

At a signal the Kootenai chief joined him in the arena and they enacted the conflict on the mountain amid the storm.

The tom-toms pealed like thunder. Loud and sibilant and shrill rose the war-cry, when, at this climax, the White Quiver disarmed Spotted Horse, then spared his life.

"Now tell them with your lips what you told me," the White Quiver cried, addressing the Kootenai Chief.

Spotted Horse lifted his hand to the sun and looking upward, said:

"Hear me. I speak the truth.

"Your god looks down and sees me and he is my witness.

"My heart feels warm towards you.

"I want to help you as one brother helps another.

"Now I swear to you in this Holy Place that the Dawn Mist was not stolen

by me nor by any of my people. Neither was the Pinto Pony. Neither was the white buffalo hide.

"If I lie may I drop dead!"

His words were rendered into the Piegan tongue by a disinterested interpreter.

Spotted Horse ceased and took his position at the right hand of the White Quiver, who continued:

"Because Spotted Horse is a man of honor and swore to me as he has this day to you, that the Dawn Mist was not in his lodges, I returned and was called a madman or a coward."

Fire like lightning flashed in his eyes. Sweat streamed from his brow; the thews stood out hard and tense as bars of steel beneath the flesh.

"I came back. My heart was dead. I was laughed at, reviled. I determined to go on the war-path and kill until I found her or was myself killed. But the Great Spirit shed light on my ignorance. He gave my eyes new sight; my brain new wisdom.

"The Dawn Mist was stolen by a damned traitor among our own people!"

He flashed like a thunderbolt upon the Owl Brave, pointed a branding finger at him and cried:

"Owl Brave I accuse you! If I lie my life is yours! We will fight outside the Medicine Lodge and the people shall judge between us!"

The multitude was in an uproar. There was the din of many voices like the unleashed tempest or breakers in a storm.

The ceremonies came to an abrupt and dramatic end.

When a speech could be heard here and there, it was evident that there were furious partisans on both sides. Some shouted that the White Quiver had gone mad; others that he was right.

Above the discordant clamor and confusion of contending tongues, the surging and swaying of the crowd that had become a mob, the White Quiver heard Wolf Medicine's voice peal out clear and strong, saying:

"White Quiver, beloved of the Sun, I name you Chief among Chiefs!"

Spotted Horse stayed close to his friend, his hand clasping the hilt of his knife, ready to defend him if it need be.

Shoulder to shoulder they struggled through the heaving throng, to where the Owl Brave had been. He was no longer there.

"Let the traitor come out and fight! Where is he?" the White Quiver cried.

None could answer.

The Owl Brave had fled.

CHAPTER XVIII

WITH the accusation of the White Quiver ringing in his ears, the Owl Brave fled, obeying the wild, brute instinct of a tracked and hunted thing. He had no thought for the future. The curse of Na-to-si, the Sun-God, was upon him and he flew blindly, impotently, seeking a lair in which to escape the vengeance that was overtaking him. He beat onward, instinctively guiding his course towards a certain cavern in the mountains where the evil genius, Ky-O, might shield him with spells and magic. He had lost track of the rising and setting of suns when, one evening, he staggered up to the low entrance of the cave.

A small tipi was pitched near by, cunningly concealed behind a screen of trees. From the opening at its top a thin spiral

of smoke rose against the twilight sky. Ky-O was gathering pine cones and resinous sticks for kindlings when she caught sight of him. He started at the sound of her thin, shrill voice.

They spoke together in whispers, he relating the events of the Medicine Lodge and she muttering again and again, between her fangs:

"Bad Medicine! Bad Medicine!"

"You! You with your powers and your magic, must shield me."

She shrugged her shoulders and gibbered at him.

"What have you to give? To make medicine takes strength and I am old, old and poor."

"O! damned she-bear," he cried, clinching his fists, "you have robbed me. You suck my blood, devour me, pick me bone from bone and ask for more!"

She stooped and began gathering faggots again.

A low, quavering moan sounded through the evening quiet. It was at

once faint and vibrant, illusive and insistent.

"Where is she?" he asked.

The hag pointed towards the cavern.

Darkness was thickening about them. The stars kindled in the sky and the world was purple-clothed in shade.

Presently the shadow of a human being stood in the black hole leading into the cave. It was a woman,—or the ghost of one,—gaunt and spectral, white with the ghastly pallor of things that know not the sunlight and the vitalizing air of day. As she stood there half-hidden by the twilight, her great, black, restless eyes burning in her deathly face, she seemed more of illusion than reality,—a mere fantastic mist-shape forming but to dissolve in air. The faint, insistent moan sounded ceaselessly from her parted lips. She stepped forward uncertainly and as the pale starlight filtered down and touched her face it was plain that she was mad. She walked as one who sleeps or as a ghost newly risen from the grave might glide

timidly out into the world again to visit its life-time haunts.

The Owl Brave had concealed himself as she approached but as though drawn by a spell she followed him and stood over him and as her shifting eyes fell upon him she shrieked:

"You! You again! Only *you*. Where is he whom they call the White Quiver?"

Then she laughed horribly and he shuddered in terror and shrank away.

In that wild outbreak her face underwent a terrible change and she bore a striking resemblance to the Night Wind as he was in his wildest moments.

The Owl Brave and Ky-O led her struggling and chafing back into the prison-cave where the wolf-dog kept watch. Her frenzy grew until she sank exhausted, unconscious in a heap upon the damp earth,—a quivering, palpitating wreck, the merest ghostly shadow of the Dawn Mist.

They watched her a moment by the smoldering firelight, then departed.

"She grows worse," Ky-O whispered. "The spells come oftener and last longer. In one of them she will die."

"What will you do to save me?" he asked.

"To save you? Nothing! Know you not that the White Quiver would give me his all,—yes, down to his last bead of wampum,—to find out what I could tell? My silence is enough. I am done with you. Sick of the whole foul bargain. Do you not think I am weary of being keeper of yonder mad thing. I helped you steal the Dawn Mist,—showed you the way and was your slave. You have cheated me. You have not the honor to keep faith with me. Where are the pelts, where is the buffalo meat, where are the ponies you promised me?"

He cursed her and laid his hand on the hilt of his knife. The wolf-dog snarled and showed his sharp, white teeth.

"Be gone!" she cried, shaken with rage. "You dare not strike me! You have the white heart of a coward. Venge-

ance is overtaking you, Owl Brave! I have had a dream. It was a strong dream. I saw you lying in your own blood and you were cold beneath the moon!

"I knew you would come!

"I have killed striped-face, the badger, and filled his hide with his blood. Look into it and see if my dream is true or if it lies. If you are to live to old age you will see yourself white-haired; if you are to die of disease you will see yourself wasted to the bone, and if you are to be killed you will see yourself without your scalp."

She led him into the lodge where she had dug a shallow hole, stretched and pinned down a badger's hide filled with the creature's blood mixed with a little charcoal. The smooth, red surface formed a perfect mirror. The Owl Brave was loath to obey, yet mastered by the desire to penetrate the secrets of the future and learn his fate, he crouched low, bent over and looked. Ky-O leaned

at his shoulder. He took one swift, terrified glance then jumped up with a cry.

He had seen himself without his scalp!

"The dream is true!" Ky-O shrilled in his ear. "You will lie in your blood beneath the moon as I saw you. May coyotes eat your flesh! May your spirit dwell in the Great Darkness!"

He plunged off in the night with the ominous prophecy in his ears, driven from his last shelter, a fugitive, shunned by men and cursed by the gods.

As he leaped headlong in his flight, a coyote sprang up and crossed his path, which, as everyone knows is a sign of impending disaster. He stopped, afraid, and looked back. As he did so he fancied he saw silhouetted against the blackness of the cavern, in the place where Ky-O had stood a moment before, the monster figure of a grizzly bear.

CHAPTER XIX

THE young men of the Kootenai and Selish tribes were growing restless. They had joined the Piegan youths in a series of dances and gambling games but now that the time was approaching to break camp and cross the range to their own country they thought of the long, hard march which, by reason of the scarcity of horses, many of them must make afoot, and consequently they became sullen and discontented. The Medicine Lodge had been a splendid festival but it was past and the young braves longed for excitement. Perhaps some of the old ancestral hatred of their whilom foes lingered in their hearts. In any event they chafed under the restraint imposed upon them by the head chief and like leashed hounds, strained at their bonds. Because Spotted

Horse, their leader, had become devoted to the White Quiver was no reason for them to be filled with the same sentiment for these old-time enemies.

This spirit of mischievous unrest manifested itself in petty devastation and riotous pranks. One night the camp was plunged into chaotic uproar because a wild colt had been thrust bodily into a lodge where the occupants were peacefully sleeping. The bucking broncho pulled the dwelling down upon their heads and they rushed out terrified and chagrined. Another time a band of young bloods threw lariats over an old woman's tipi, then rode furiously away at full speed, leaving the dismayed squaw staring blankly at the stars. Sham attacks shocked the quiet with hideous noise and many another wild caper precipitated the encampment into boisterous disorder. In spite of the vigilance of the different bands of the I-kun-uh-kah-t'si, whose business it was to maintain order, the offenders escaped, unknown and un-

punished. The young Kootenais and Selish yearned silently at first, beneath a mask of smiles, then in covert whispers and at last clamorously, to match their strength against the Piegans at some feat of daring, in brave manly sport or on the war-path.

The Piegans were no less keen for excitement. Therefore the youths of the different tribes discussed the matter in secret. Why not run the ponies for big stakes? Say, for instance, if the Piegans won, they should take all of the Kootenai and Selish ponies, and if on the other hand, the Kootenais and Selish won, they should take possession of the Piegans' horses.

When the time was ripe a delegation of young Piegans waited upon Eagle Plume and another composed of Selish and Kootenais appeared before Spotted Horse. Both chiefs refused to hear them at first, but the young men were restless and their fighting blood was hot. There was an interval of horrid, breathless quiet

through the camp, such as one feels before the breaking of a storm. The chiefs held a council and agreed unwillingly that it was better to humor their rash youths in this mad prank rather than risk the possibility of hostility and the rupture of the new-forged bonds of peace.

News of the races was proclaimed in every tipi. This was to be no mere running of ponies, nor trial of speed alone, but of skill and daring. The course was laid out by representatives of both sides. They chose a narrow, precarious shelf of rock barely wide enough for two horsemen to ride abreast, overhanging a gorge. This shelf extended for a mile or more. Each tribe tested its best riders and mounts. The White Quiver was reckoned one of the skillful horsemen of his people but he refused to ride. He knew that these races were in bad faith and he would have no part in them. The Kootenais selected a strong, lithe young man for their champion.

The great day came. Early in the

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morning a huge, turgid sea of people surged and rolled over the quivering gold of the prairie, pressing near the edge of the declivity along which the race-course extended. A group of men in authority were assembled at the starting point, another group was stationed at the finish and soldiers from the three tribes patrolled the way to see that there was no foul play.

The riders mounted amid profound silence and urged their ponies cautiously to the rocky shelf that showed livid as a scar before them. Far below in haze-shrouded mystery lay the gorge.

The signal to start was three arrow shots. At the third shot the riders were off simultaneously, hurtling, straining, flying along the narrow ledge. Nose to nose the ponies ran. The riders lay almost flat, their heads stretching far up on the horses' necks. Now the Piegan was half a length ahead, again the Kootenai led and yet again they rode abreast on the very brink of destruction. There

were many places along the course where it was impossible for the horses to run side by side and as they approached these narrow vantage points each rider strained every muscle and urged his pony to utmost speed in the effort to reach it and pass on ahead. Often the rotten rock crumbled beneath the flying hoofs and dislodged pieces of stone fell with a dull boom into the depths below. Still they rushed on resistless as the wind, toward the goal. Sometimes they were lost to the view of the thousand of eyes that followed them and again, they darted into the open and the air shivered with the shock of the war-cry that broke from the lips of those whose champion led. For more than a mile they raced and when, finally, in a white foam of sweat, the ponies plunged to the goal they were abreast. The race was a draw.

The chiefs were glad. They were eager to divide the honors, but the blood of the braves was up. Never should the matter rest as it was. They would choose

new champions and fresh mounts and the next day they would race again.

The Night Wind had watched the running in terrible excitement; he had shrieked with pain when the Piegan fell behind, yelled with barbaric joy when he pushed ahead, and all the while, unmindful of the distance between him and the riders he had shouted words of advice. "Bend lower, *lower!* Now urge him! Check him and give him breath! O! O! you fool!" he had cried in a passion. And when the two opposing racers came in together he wept for chagrin and shame. "If only I had ridden," he said, "we would have won."

When it was announced that another race would be tried, the Night Wind was chosen for the champion of the Piegans. He was mad, they knew, but he could ride like his brothers, the winds of heaven, and ride he should for the glory of the tribe! The boy was speechless with delight. Sudden dignity and calm possessed him. For the first time in his

blighted life a trust had been imposed upon him, and he promised himself that his people should never be ashamed of their choice. His mother, the Tall Pine, protested against his riding and Eagle Plume remained silent but the Night Wind gloried in this triumph.

The second day's course was kept secret. The same delegation from the three tribes mapped it out as before but this time they smiled grimly and said:

"There will be no draw."

The day dawned fair and brilliant with sun. Once again the human sea submerged the prairie.

A herald rode out, threading his way among the multitude, telling them to divide into bodies and leave a broad open space for the horses.

The course was long and devious and difficult. The start was made among some low but rugged hills, thence down over the prairie and it ended at the brink of the gorge!

A great sigh heaved and died like a

gust of wind, from the breasts of the spectators, then all was silent again. Plunging down over the rolling hills came the riders. They were well matched as those of the day before had been, but as they came nearer, the Kootenai, who had the better mount, gained a length on the Night Wind. The boy's long, black hair was streaming behind him, he swayed and bent to the motion of the horse with the agility of a willow-shoot. Yet he was falling behind. It soon became evident to those who knew the trick that he was purposely holding in his horse to give him breath and strength for the final spurt, while his rival was belaboring and exhausting his pony. The people had parted in two solid masses. The course lay smooth and tawny and fair until it stopped abruptly, sharp and clean-cut against the blue. They had passed the last stretch, the finish of the race. Suddenly the Night Wind yelled exultantly, dug his heels into the flanks of his horse, gave him free rein and the animal darted

forward like a shooting star. He gained on the Kootenai, who made a last desperate effort to rouse his jaded mount. The end of the course lay scarcely a stone's throw ahead. The sea of humanity tossed and swayed. Then a dead calm fell. Not a sound was heard but the mad clatter of hoof-beats; not a hawk-plume quivered. The Night Wind was gaining. They were together again, together and the gorge was just ahead! The Kootenai jerked his horse back on its haunches. But the Night Wind never hesitated nor paused. He rose, looked back, smiled so his white teeth flashed, waved a triumphant hand, shrieked the war-cry of victory and plunged over the precipice.

The Piegans had won the day and the Night Wind had gone down to his death in the haze-hung depths of the abyss.

CHAPTER XX

THE death of the Night Wind had plunged the Piegans in gloom. The Tall Pine mourned him bitterly. To her his passing was an ill omen from the Great Mystery. Had Na-to-si, the Sun-God, accepted her fast and sacrifice he would not have taken her last remaining comfort,—the half-mad, wild-sweet boy with the heart of a child and the years of a man. The wise words of Wolf Medicine, the silent but constant sympathy of her lord, Eagle Plume, failed to lift the cloud that eclipsed her soul. In this hour of trouble she recalled her unjustly cruel words to the White Quiver when he returned alone over the waste of snow. Even as he had gone forth and done and dared to no purpose, so had she made the supreme effort of her life and likewise failed.

She sent for the White Quiver and took his hand in hers, which was curiously tense and cold.

"My son," she said, "you went forth to seek the Dawn Mist and returned alone. I blamed you and flung bitter words of reproach at you. Now I, her mother, who bore her, have fasted and built a Medicine Lodge and the Great Sun Mystery has taken from me my last child in token of anger. I, too have failed, yet I hear no words of blame from you, who love her. Forgive me and call me *Ni-kis-ta,* your mother!"

He did as she desired and tried to tell her that all was not yet lost but she would not be comforted.

Meantime the Kootenais had become sullen over the loss of their ponies and Spotted Horse knew that it was dangerous to detain them longer.

Eagle Plume and Spotted Horse parted with expressions of everlasting friendship. Henceforth they should be allies, the one as much at home to hunt and camp in the

other's country as though it were his own.

The White Quiver rode far out over the prairie by the side of his friend to see him on his way. The two chiefs kept apart from the people, speaking softly and earnestly together. At last the gold disc of the sun dropped behind the mountains, the magic of the afterglow transfigured the world and the White Quiver knew that the time had come when he must part from Spotted Horse. They stood silent, facing each other in the effulgent flush of the dying day, looking with soul-penetrating gaze into each other's eyes. By some subtle intuition they were conscious that this parting was to be forever. They clasped hands for a moment and knew each other's hearts, then swift as impulse, the White Quiver wheeled about, dug his heels into his pony's side and was off like the whirlwind across the level of the plains.

CHAPTER XXI

EVERY means had failed to find the Dawn Mist. She was as hopelessly lost as in the moon of her disappearance. But two things they did know; she had not been taken by an enemy of the tribe, though by treachery she might have been delivered into the hands of hostiles, and in some way the Owl Brave was responsible. Had he been innocent he would have accepted the White Quiver's challenge and fought in defence of his honor; as it was he had slunk away like a coyote.

The White Quiver turned over every little circumstance in his mind and was confused with doubt. Then out of time and distance came the vision of a heaven-reaching peak and the unanswered summons of Going-to-the-Sun.

When he first saw the mighty mountain

and fell under its thrall he felt that ultimately he must answer its call. Now he knew that the time was come. Sleeping and waking the vision of that swelling blue billow breaking into a white foam of snow against the sky, rose before him, and called to him, called to him in a siren voice:

"Come! Come with me for I am Going-to-the-Sun!"

He slept and dreamed that he was starting out on the old quest,—to find the Dawn Mist and the Pinto Pony. He was provided with a magical lariat of plaited horsehair. The way before him was golden and long until it melted in the shadow of blue distances. He heard the galloping of hoofs, saw on the yellow-white earth of the prairie prints that were made by none other than the cradle-footed Pinto horse.

"At last, at last!" he cried, "I have come upon his track and once I overtake him he will bear me to the Dawn Mist."

And because he was very light-hearted

and happy he fell to swinging his lariat in circles over his head and singing lustily the measure of his war-song.

"O! I am going to marry the daughter of my Chief!"

Suddenly before him stood the Pinto Pony. He cried aloud for joy but as he whirled the noose of his lariat far out to capture the animal, he awoke.

The dream was vivid and it haunted him and therefore he had made a lariat of horsehair, long and stout and strong.

With this thrown over his arm, his elk-horn bow and white quiver of arrows on his back, his knife in his belt and a pipe with which to court prophetic dreams, he started out one sunrise. But whither he was going or what was his destination no one knew.

He scarcely tarried to eat or sleep and make his devotions to the Great Mystery until once more he stood awed and humbled in the presence of Going-to-the-Sun.

The ascent was dangerous and steep. Abysses threatened him with black, purgatorial depths; cliffs smooth as glass mocked him and snow-fields and glaciers lay across his way. He heeded no obstacles nor halted. His feet seemed to be winged and he soared upward even as the mountain's self until he said exultantly:

"I, too, am Going to the Sun!"

He dropped in a swoon and through the solitude the Great Mystery spoke to him, saying:

"Your search is nearly at an end and you shall be rewarded!"

When he opened his eyes it was night and he seemed very near the stars. An arctic chill was in the air and about him were ice and snow that never melt.

In the morning he went down into the world, following no plan but allowing his feet to carry him whither they would.

"Your search is nearly at an end and you shall be rewarded," kept ringing joyfully in his mind.

Some greater force than judgment was

guiding him and he gave himself up to it, feeling wonderfully light of heart and without responsibility.

As he descended to lower altitudes he saw fresh grizzly bear tracks. Again and again they crossed his path and he thought as he stooped to mark the course of the hated beast:

"Ever and forever crossing every trail of life I travel, every hope my heart bears, is the accursed track of Ky-O."

The blue-black wing of night spread over the sky, chilling the sunset's flame. The evening star shone brilliantly in the west and the pensive beauty of twilight settled on the world. An owl wheeled noisily among the trees and hooted. The shadows deepened into night. The Wolf Trail, that celestial path that countless centuries of passing spirits have worn across the heavens splashed the black arch of night with the softest filter of light. The horned moon rose up out of the black bar of the horizon and shone on the mountain-bound waters of the Walled-in Lake.

The White Quiver came down to the shore. He stopped to look at the scene before him wrought in mysterious, darkling shades of moonlit blue. Over the waters little waves glinting with silvery light danced to the fluting of the evening wind. The twelve sky-cleaving peaks, awesome with shadow and shimmering with illuminated snow were austerely beautiful,—vast black shadows against the star-dust. Between the infinite darkness overhead and that of the earth beneath was a wonderful, luminous haze, impalpable as thistledown, yet all-pervading. This was one of those rare nights when one feels that he is on the borderland of the Unknown. Under its spell nothing seemed impossible. The light wind died and a wonderful, vocal stillness lay on the world. The White Quiver waited and listened expectantly, as though the lips of the Infinite were about to open and reveal the eternal mystery of Life and Death, when, out of the quiet he heard a strange noise of snapping

twigs and the rustling of dried leaves. It was a cautious, tentative, stealthy sound. Perhaps the bear, whose hateful tracks had crossed his trail, was hiding in the underbrush. He concealed himself behind a boulder, keeping his eyes fixed on a clump of the fateful ghost-trees, whence the sound seemed to come. Profound silence fell in which he heard insects shrilling reedily and the mournful cry of a loon. The seconds dragged heavily. His heart pounded furiously against his breast yet he knew not why. His limbs cramped under him but he did not move. After a long while the same cautious, suppressed sound stirred again. The matted branches parted, a human figure, half-crouching, slid out and the moonlight betrayed the gaunt and haunted face of the Owl Brave.

With the deadly-certain leap of a mountain lion the White Quiver was upon him. Their bodies clinched in the awful intimacy of the death grip. They writhed and swayed and strained until the sweat

dripped and their muscles hardened and set like flint. Out of the silence sounded the harsh noise of scuffling feet and the quick, whistling breath of the struggling men. Against the silvered-blue night the two black figures showed, bending, swaying in terrible rhythm. Back and forth they lurched and strained, dogged and unyielding. The White Quiver was the larger and stronger, but the Owl Brave was fighting for his life. With a quick motion the White Quiver tripped him and he fell. The White Quiver pinned him down with his knee on his breast. The Owl Brave watched his enemy draw a short knife from its sheath, hold it in readiness and bend over him like fate. Then for the first time the silence between them was broken.

"You stole the Dawn Mist," the White Quiver said in a low, penetrating voice.

"Aye! and fooled you and the wise men!"

A hideous exultation distorted the Owl Brave's face. He felt the cold point of

steel on his breast but after a second it was withdrawn again.

"Where did you take her?"

"She has often been within call of you, —when you were not hunting her in the Kootenai land."

"O! you accursed! How have you done this? Who has helped you?"

"The witch woman, Ky-O, has been her keeper."

Even then, prone upon the ground, with the knife aimed at his heart, the Owl Brave felt something akin to joy in betraying the hag who had driven him out of his last refuge with the prophecy which was then being fulfilled.

"Where is the Dawn Mist now?"

The White Quiver uttered these words slowly, painfully, as one who makes a great effort.

"See yonder mist-shape over the moon?" the Owl Brave answered.

The White Quiver raised his eyes and saw a silvery, spirit shape of mist, gossamer, filmy and bright as a spangled veil

and by some trick of the atmosphere, the moon, peering through its jewelled meshes, looked curiously like a woman's face.

"She is as far beyond you as that mist-shape, yet were you wise you could reach her in a hard day's march."

The hot blood swept in a red tide through the White Quiver.

"Tell me where you have hidden her and I will kill you without torture!"

"Never!"

The Owl Brave smiled with hate triumphant.

The White Quiver bound him hand and foot. The malevolent crimson glow of a fire shone on the night and only the watchful stars of heaven were witnesses to that tragedy. . . .

The mist-wreath floated past and the moon shone down impartially upon the placid lake, the hooded shores and the dead man lying in a dark-red ooze of blood.

The White Quiver bent over and gazed

at him, searched him for some trace of the Dawn Mist,—all in vain. Even in death the Owl Brave had thwarted him.

As he rose to go he looked from the ghastly dead at his feet to the sublimity of Going-to-the-Sun. The moon had now risen so high that it shone on that mountain of mountains, lighting up the glaciers in its crown and the coldly silent eagles of stone perched among the stars. Then he recalled the night before, when, upon the pinnacle the Great Mystery had said to him in a dream:

"Your search is nearly at an end and you will be rewarded."

The memory of that promise flooded his heart with hope as the rising sun lights the world. With a sudden uplift of spirits he turned his back upon the man who had died at his hands, upon that tragedy of the darkness and the solitude and started out once more to find the Dawn Mist.

That night four crosses of light appeared about the moon;—the sign that a great chief was soon to die.

CHAPTER XXII

THE White Quiver traveled long and far out across the face of the prairie, but how long or how far he did not know because he kept no track of the rising and the setting of the sun. When he was tired he rested; when he was hungry he killed game or picked berries and ate, but his pauses were short and he pressed forever onward. He had often hunted on these plains of amber, overarched with blue and patterned with purple cloud-shadows, yet to his surprise a broad highway opened before him which lead straight ahead and was lost in space. Then presently, as he followed the highway, he noticed, looming faintly out of the blue atmosphere, still bluer mountains that he had never heard of nor seen before. Strange, surpassing strange, he

thought, as he hurried on faster than the cloud-shadows. A wonderful stillness lay over the plains of amber and the skies of blue,—a silence as subtly harmonious as dreams of music. But suddenly a sound pulsed out of that silence with the sharp and measured clearness of a drum. He listened. It was a horse's hoof-beat. Then he noticed for the first time that there were hoof-prints on the broad highway,—the hoof-prints of a cradle-footed horse! A light cloud of dust appeared in the distance and as it came nearer he could distinguish the form of a pony rushing towards him at full gallop. And as this pony came yet nearer it whinnied to him and he shouted aloud with joy, for it was the lost Medicine Pony, his beloved Pinto horse! It stopped abruptly a good stone's throw beyond him and though he called to it with endearing names it would not come closer. Then, with deft, whirling circle he threw the horsehair lariat and it fell about the pony's neck. But even with this, try as he would, he could

not get the animal to cross what seemed to be an invisible line. As though with fright it reared and plunged and snorted. He gave up trying to force the pony, but holding the lariat in his hands approached it and leaped on its bare back. In a second it wheeled about and started at a mad run in the direction whence it had come,—towards the blue mountains that were as etherial and transparent as the sky.

On, on they flew!

The White Quiver patted the mane of his pet and whispered in its ear:

"Take me to your mistress, the Dawn Mist, O! Pinto horse!"

It was a strange country they traversed, barren yet beautiful and luminous with brilliant light like the flash of jewels, and though they traveled very long and very far the sun stood still in the cloudless zenith.

The mountains towered higher and bolder and bluer but always with the concentrated, impalpable blue of heaven.

On, on they flew!

The mountains were close at hand and he noticed that at their base was a black and yawning chasm. Straight toward this the Pinto Pony rushed with the swiftness of the wind. Into the dark and chill of the passage under the mountains they plunged. The White Quiver could hear the trickle of running water, feel the icy spray of unseen falls upon his face. Through the blackness they clattered and crashed never hesitating, never stopping.

Then suddenly they burst into the white light of the new day.

The White Quiver was blinded by the dazzling brightness for a moment, but gradually a wonderful scene took shape before his eyes. A vast plain covered with deep, luxuriant flower-patterned grass spread out to the encircling skies, and feeding there, as far as his vision could penetrate, were countless thousands of horses, silk and beaver buffalo, elk, deer and antelope. Tall shade trees grew on pleasant slopes and in their

leafy branches yellow-breasts and blue-birds were singing with a sweetness such as he had never heard. As he looked more closely he noticed horses he had owned in his youth. Yonder was his buckskin pony, here was the little black nag with a star of white on his head. And marvel of marvels, grazing among the fat, sleek herds was the white buffalo cow he had hunted and killed!

A mist hung over a little winding stream that laced the green with silver. It floated against the blue and as it approached he saw through the radiant transparency her whom he sought, the Incarnation of the Mist.

"Beloved! O! Dawn Mist!" he cried, dropping on his knees overcome with joy before her.

And she, transfigured with spiritual beauty, smiled with the beatitude of love fulfilled and beckoned him to her.

. . . . . .

The White Quiver never returned.

The Piegans, who had come at last to

recognize him as a great hero, waited long and anxiously for him and at last mourned him as dead.

Nor was the Dawn Mist ever seen again.

Though none knew whence the young chief went on his solitary journey it was believed he had gone to join his lost love in the Great White Desert of Eternity.

When the hard winter had passed and the snows were melting in the first chinook of spring, a hunter found, in a lingering drift, the stark and frozen body of the Pinto horse.

THE END

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